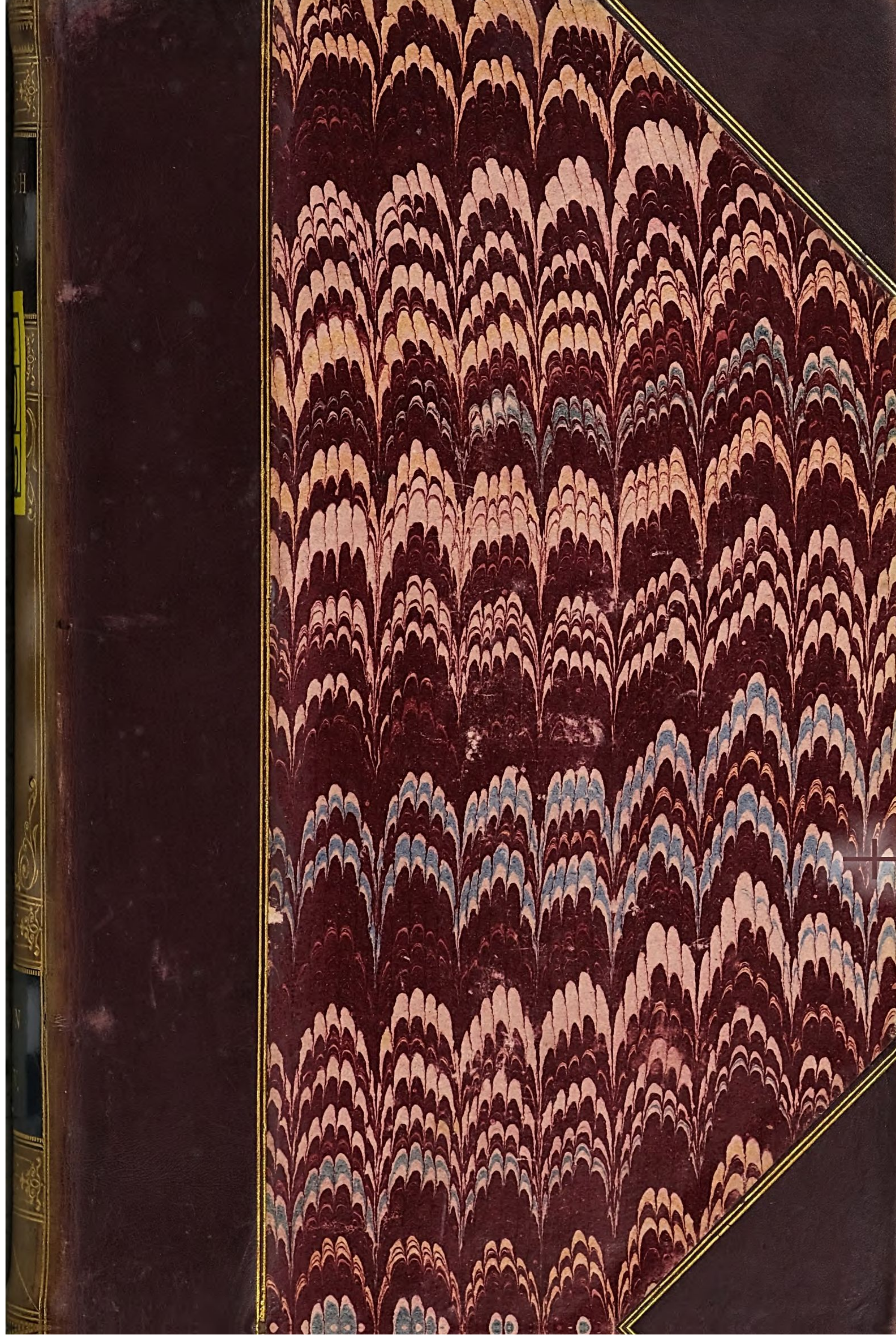








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G. A. Siebig

Tanglewood

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
LORD BYRON

WITH A MEMOIR

TEN VOLUMES IN FIVE

VOL. IV.



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SARDANAPALUS,

A TRAGEDY.

VOL VII.

1

ST. LOUIS, MO.

1887

TO
THE ILLUSTRIOUS GOETHE

A S T R A N G E R

PRESUMES TO OFFER THE HOMAGE
OF A LITERARY VASSAL TO HIS LIEGE LORD,
THE FIRST OF EXISTING WRITERS,
WHO HAS CREATED THE LITERATURE OF HIS OWN COUNTRY,
AND ILLUSTRATED THAT OF EUROPE.

T H E U N W O R T H Y P R O D U C T I O N
WHICH THE AUTHOR VENTURES TO INSCRIBE TO HIM
IS ENTITLED
SARDANAPALUS.*

* ["Well knowing myself and my labors, in my old age, I could not but reflect with gratitude and diffidence on the expressions contained in this dedication, nor interpret them but as the generous tribute of a superior genius, no less original in the choice than inexhaustible in the materials of his subjects." — GOETHE.]

P R E F A C E.

IN publishing the following Tragedies* I have only to repeat, that they were not composed with the most remote view to the stage. On the attempt made by the Managers in a former instance, the public opinion has been already expressed. With regard to my own private feelings, as it seems that they are to stand for nothing, I shall say nothing.

For the historical foundation of the following compositions the reader is referred to the Notes.

The Author has in one instance attempted to preserve, and in the other to approach, the “unities;” conceiving that with any very distant departure from them, there may be poetry, but can be no drama. He is aware of the unpopularity of this notion in present English literature; but it is not a system of his own, being merely an opinion, which, not very long ago, was the law of literature throughout the world and is still so in the more civilized parts of it. But “*nous avons changé tout cela,*” and

* [“Sardanapalus” originally appeared (as now) in the same volume with “The Two Foscari” and “Cain.”]

are reaping the advantages of the change. The writer is far from conceiving that any thing he can adduce by personal precept or example can at all approach his regular, or even irregular predecessors: he is merely giving a reason why he preferred the more regular formation of a structure, however feeble, to an entire abandonment of all rules whatsoever. Where he has failed, the failure is in the architect, — and not in the art.

INTRODUCTION

TO SARDANAPALUS.

ON the original MS. Byron wrote:—“*Mem.* Ravenna, May 27, 1821.—I began this drama on the 13th of January, 1821; and continued the two first acts very slowly, and by intervals. The three last acts were written since the 13th of May, 1821 (this present month); that is to say, in a fortnight.” The following are extracts from Byron’s diary and letters:—

“January 13, 1821. Sketched the outline and Dram. Pers. of an intended tragedy of Sardanapalus, which I have for some time meditated. Took the names from Diodorus Siculus, (I know the history of Sardanapalus, and have known it since I was twelve years old,) and read over a passage in the ninth volume of Mitford’s Greece, where he rather vindicates the memory of this last of the Assyrians. Carried Teresa the Italian translation of Grillparzer’s Sappho. She quarrelled with me, because I said that love was *not the loftiest* theme for

a tragedy ; and, having the advantage of her native language, and natural female eloquence, she overcame my fewer arguments. I believe she was right. I must put more love into 'Sardanapalus' than I intended."

"May 25. I have completed four acts. I have made Sardanapalus brave, (though voluptuous, as history represents him,) and also as amiable as my poor powers could render him. I have strictly preserved all the unities hitherto, and mean to continue them in the fifth, if possible ; but NOT for *the stage*."

"May 30. By this post I send you the tragedy. You will remark that the unities are all strictly preserved. The scene passes in the same hall always : the time, a summer's night, about nine hours or less ; though it begins before sunset, and ends after sunrise. It is not for the stage, any more than the other was intended for it ; and I shall take better care this time that they don't get hold on't."

"July 14. I trust that 'Sardanapalus' will not be mistaken for a political play ; which was so far from my intention, that I thought of nothing but Asiatic history. My object has been to dramatize, like the Greeks (a *modest* phrase), striking passages of history and mythology. You will find all this very *unlike* Shakspeare ; and so much the better in one sense, for I look upon him to be the worst of models, though the most extraordinary of writers. It has been my object to be as simple and severe as Alfieri, and I have broken down the poetry as

nearly as I could to common language. The hardship is that, in these times, one can neither speak of kings nor queens without suspicion of politics or personalities. I intended neither.

“July 22. Print away, and publish. I think they must own that I have more styles than one. ‘Sardanapalus’ is, however, almost a comic character; but, for that matter, so is Richard the Third. Mind the *unities*, which are my great object of research. I am glad Gifford likes it: as for the million, you see I have carefully consulted any thing but the taste of the day for extravagant ‘coups de théâtre.’”

Sardanapalus was published in December, 1821, and was received with very great approbation.

The following is an extract from The Life of Dr. Parr: — “In the course of the evening the Doctor cried out — ‘Have you read Sardanapalus?’ — ‘Yes, Sir.’ — ‘Right; and you couldn’t sleep a wink after it?’ — ‘No.’ — ‘Right, right — now don’t say a word more about it to-night.’ — The memory of that fine poem seemed to act like a spell of horrible fascination upon him.”

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

SARDANAPALUS, *King of Nineveh and Assyria, etc.*

ARBACES, *the Mede who aspired to the Throne.*

BELESES, *a Chaldean and Soothsayer.*

SALEMENES, *the King's Brother-in-law.*

ALTADA, *an Assyrian Officer of the Palace.*

PANIA.

ZAMES.

SFERO.

BALEA.

WOMEN.

ZARINA, *the Queen.*

MYRRHA, *an Ionian female Slave, and the Favorite of*
SARDANAPALUS.

Women composing the Harem of SARDANAPALUS, Guards,
Attendants, Chaldean Priests, Medes, etc. etc.

Scene — a Hall in the Royal Palace of Nineveh.

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THE HISTORY OF THE

SARDANAPALUS.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Hall in the Palace.

Salemenes (solus). HE hath wronged his queen,
but still he is her lord;
He hath wronged my sister, still he is my brother;
He hath wronged his people, still he is their sovereign,
And I must be his friend as well as subject:

* [Sardanapalus is, beyond all doubt, a work of great beauty and power; and though the heroine has many traits in common with the Medoras and Gulnares of Lord Byron's undramatic poetry, the hero must be allowed to be a new character in his hands. He has, indeed, the scorn of war, and glory, and priestcraft, and regular morality, which distinguishes the rest of his lordship's favorites; but he has no misanthropy, and very little pride — and may be regarded, on the whole, as one of the most truly good-humored, amiable, and respectable voluptuaries to whom we have ever been presented. In this conception of his character, the author has very wisely followed nature and fancy rather than history. *His* Sardanapalus is not an effeminate, worn-out debauchee, with shattered nerves and exhausted senses, the slave of indolence and vicious habits; but a sanguine votary of pleasure, a princely epicure, indulging, revelling in boundless luxury while he can, but with a soul so inured to

He must not perish thus. I will not see
The blood of Nimrod and Semiramis
Sink in the earth, and thirteen hundred years
Of empire ending like a shepherd's tale ;
He must be roused. In his effeminate heart
There is a careless courage which corruption
Has not all quenched, and latent energies,

voluptuousness, so saturated with delights, that pain and danger, when they come uncalled for, give him neither concern nor dread; and he goes forth from the banquet to the battle, as to a dance or measure, attired by the Graces, and with youth, joy, and love for his guides. He dallies with Bellona as bridegroom — for his sport and pastime; and the spear or fan, the shield or shining mirror, become his hands equally well. He enjoys life, in short, and triumphs in death; and whether in prosperous or adverse circumstances, his soul smiles out superior to evil. — JEFFREY.

The Sardanapalus of Lord Byron is pretty nearly such a person as the Sardanapalus of history may be supposed to have been. Young, thoughtless, spoiled by flattery and unbounded self-indulgence, but with a temper naturally amiable, and abilities of a superior order, he affects to undervalue the sanguinary renown of his ancestors as an excuse for inattention to the most necessary duties of his rank; and flatters himself, while he is indulging his own sloth, that he is making his people happy. Yet, even in his fondness for pleasure, there lurks a love of contradiction. Of the whole picture, selfishness is the prevailing feature — selfishness admirably drawn indeed; apologized for by every palliating circumstance of education and habit, and clothed in the brightest colors of which it is susceptible from youth, talents, and placability. But it is selfishness still; and we should have been tempted to quarrel with the art which made vice and frivolity thus amiable, if Lord Byron had not at the same time pointed out with much skill the bitterness and weariness of spirit which inevitably wait on such a character; and if he had not given a fine contrast to the picture in the accompanying portraits of Salemenes and of Myrrha. — BISHOP HEBER.]

Repressed by circumstance, but not destroyed —
Steeped, but not drowned, in deep voluptuousness.
If born a peasant, he had been a man
To have reached an empire: to an empire born,
He will bequeathe none; nothing but a name,
Which his sons will not prize in heritage: —
Yet, not all lost, even yet he may redeem
His sloth and shame, by only being that
Which he should be, as easily as the thing
He should not be and is. Were it less toil
To sway his nations than consume his life?
To head an army than to rule a harem?
He sweats in palling pleasures, dulls his soul,*
And saps his goodly strength, in toils which yield
not

Health like the chase, nor glory like the war —
He must be roused. Alas! there is no sound
 [*Sound of soft music heard from within.*
To rouse him short of thunder. Hark! the lute,
The lyre, the timbrel; the lascivious tinklings
Of lulling instruments, the softening voices
Of women, and of beings less than women,
Must chime in to the echo of his revel,
While the great king of all we know of earth
Lolls crowned with roses, and his diadem
Lies negligently by to be caught up
By the first manly hand which dares to snatch it.
Lo, where they come! already I perceive
The reeking odors of the perfumed trains,

* [MS. — "He sweats in dreary, dulled effeminacy."]

And see the bright gems of the glittering girls,*
At once his chorus and his council, flash
Along the gallery, and amidst the damsels,
As femininely garbed, and scarce less female,
The grandson of Semiramis, the man-queen. —
He comes! Shall I await him? yes, and front him,
And tell him what all good men tell each other,
Speaking of him and his. They come, the slaves,
Led by the monarch subject to his slaves.†

* [MS. — “And see the gewgaws of the glittering girls.”]

† [Salemenes is the direct opposite to selfishness; and the character, though slightly sketched, displays little less ability than that of Sardanapalus. He is a stern, loyal, plain-spoken soldier and subject; clear-sighted, just, and honorable in his ultimate views, though not more punctilious about the means of obtaining them than might be expected from a respectable satrap of ancient Nineveh, or a respectable vizier of the modern Turkish empire. To his king, in spite of personal neglect and family injuries, he is, throughout, pertinaciously attached and punctiliously faithful. To the king's rebels he is inclined to be severe, bloody, and even treacherous; an imperfection, however, in his character, to want which would, in his situation, be almost unnatural, and which is skilfully introduced as a contrast to the instinctive perception of virtue and honor which flashes out from the indolence of his master. Of the satrap, however, the faults as well as the virtues are alike the offspring of disinterested loyalty and patriotism. It is for his country and king that he is patient of injury; for them he is valiant; for them cruel. He has no ambition of personal power, no thirst of individual fame. In battle and in victory, “Assyria!” is his only war-cry. When he sends off the queen and princes, he is less anxious for his nephews and sister than for the preservation of the line of Nimrod; and, in his last moments, it is the supposed flight of his sovereign which alone distresses and overcomes him. —
HEBER.]

SCENE II.

Enter SARDANAPALUS effeminately dressed, his Head crowned with Flowers, and his Robe negligently flowing, attended by a Train of Women and young Slaves.

Sar. (*speaking to some of his attendants*). Let the pavilion over the Euphrates
Be garlanded, and lit, and furnished forth
For an especial banquet; at the hour
Of midnight we will sup there: see nought wanting,
And bid the galley be prepared. There is
A cooling breeze which crisps the broad clear river:
We will embark anon. Fair nymphs, who deign
To share the soft hours of Sardanapalus,
We'll meet again in that the sweetest hour,
When we shall gather like the stars above us,
And you will form a heaven as bright as theirs;
Till then, let each be mistress of her time,
And thou, my own Ionian Myrrha,* choose,
Wilt thou along with them or me?

Myr.

My lord ——

Sar. My lord, my life! why answerest thou so coldly?

* “The Ionian name had been still more comprehensive, having included the Achæians and the Bœotians, who, together with those to whom it was afterwards confined, would make nearly the whole of the Greek nation; and among the orientals it was always the general name for the Greeks.” — MITFORD'S *Greece*, vol. i. p. 199.

It is the curse of kings to be so answered.

Rule thy own hours, thou rulest mine — say, wouldst
thou

Accompany our guests, or charm away
The moments from me?

Myr The king's choice is mine.*

Sar I pray thee say not so : my chiefest joy
Is to contribute to thine every wish.
I do not dare to breathe my own desire,
Lest it should clash with thine ; for thou art still
Too prompt to sacrifice thy thoughts for others.†

* [The chief charm and vivifying angel of the piece is Myrrha, the Greek slave of Sardanapalus — a beautiful, heroic, devoted, and ethereal being — in love with the generous and infatuated monarch — ashamed of loving a barbarian — and using all her influence over him to ennoble as well as to adorn his existence, and to arm him against the terrors of his close. Her voluptuousness is that of the heart — her heroism of the affections. If the part she takes in the dialogue be sometimes too subdued and submissive for the lofty daring of her character, it is still such as might become a Greek slave — a lovely Ionian girl, in whom the love of liberty and the scorn of death were tempered by the consciousness of what she regarded as a degrading passion, and an inward sense of fitness and decorum with reference to her condition. — JEFFREY.]

† [Myrrha is a female Salemenes, in whom, with admirable skill, attachment to the individual Sardanapalus is substituted for the gallant soldier's loyalty to the descendant of kings ; and whose energy of expostulation, no less than the natural high tone of her talents, her courage, and her Grecian pride, is softened into a subdued and winning tenderness by the constant and painful recollection of her abasement as a slave in the royal harem ; and still more by the lowliness of perfect womanly love in the presence of and towards the object of her passion. No character can be drawn more natural than hers ; few ever have

Myr. I would remain : I have no happiness
Save in beholding thine ; yet ——

Sar. Yet ! what YET ?
Thy own sweet will shall be the only barrier
Which ever rises betwixt thee and me.

Myr. I think the present is the wonted hour
Of council ; it were better I retire.

Sal. (*comes forward and says*) The Ionian slave
says well : let her retire.

Sar. Who answers ? How now, brother ?

Sal. The *queen's* brother,
And your most faithful vassal, royal lord.

Sar. (*addressing his train*). As I have said, let all
dispose their hours
Till midnight, when again we pray your presence.

[*The court retiring.*

(*To MYRRHA,* who is going*) Myrrha ! I thought
thou wouldst remain.

Myr. Great king,
Thou didst not say so.

Sar. But *thou* lookedst it :
I know each glance of those Ionic eyes,†
Which said thou wouldst not leave me.

been drawn more touching and amiable. Of course she is not,
nor could be, a Jewish or a Christian heroine ; but she is a model
of Grecian piety and nobility of spirit, and she is one whom a
purer faith would have raised to the level of a Rebecca or a
Miriam. — HEBER.]

* [In the original draught, "*Byblis*."]

† [MS. — "I know each glance of those deep Greek-souled
eyes."]

Myr. Sire! your brother——

Sal. His *consort's* brother, minion of Ionia!
How darest *thou* name *me* and not blush?

Sar. Not blush!
Thou hast no more eyes than heart to make her
crimson

Like to the dying day on Caucasus,
Where sunset tints the snow with rosy shadows,
And then reproach her with thine own cold blind-
ness,

Which will not see it. What, in tears, my Myrrha?

Sal. Let them flow on; she weeps for more than
one,

And is herself the cause of bitterer tears.

Sar. Cursed be he who caused those tears to flow!

Sal. Curse not thyself—millions do that already.

Sar. Thou dost forget thee: make me not re-
member

I am a monarch.

Sal. Would thou couldst!

Myr. My sovereign,
I pray, and thou, too, prince, permit my absence.

Sar. Since it must be so, and this churl has
checked

Thy gentle spirit, go; but recollect
That we must forthwith meet: I had rather lose
An empire than thy presence. [*Exit MYRRHA.*

Sal. It may be,
Thou wilt lose both, and both for ever!

Sar. Brother,

I can at least command myself, who listen
To language such as this: yet urge me not
Beyond my easy nature.

Sal. 'Tis beyond
That easy, far too easy, idle nature, [thee!
Which I would urge thee. O that I could rouse
Though 't were against myself.

Sar. By the god Baal!
The man would make me tyrant.

Sal. So thou art.
Think'st thou there is no tyranny but that
Of blood and chains? The despotism of vice —
The weakness and the wickedness of luxury —
The negligence — the apathy — the evils
Of sensual sloth — produce ten thousand tyrants,
Whose delegated cruelty surpasses
The worst acts of one energetic master,
However harsh and hard in his own bearing.
The false and fond examples of thy lusts
Corrupt no less than they oppress, and sap
In the same moment all thy pageant power
And those who should sustain it; so that whether
A foreign foe invade, or civil broil
Distract within, both will alike prove fatal:
The first thy subjects have no heart to conquer;
The last they rather would assist than vanquish.

Sar. Why, what makes thee the mouth-piece of
the people?

Sal. Forgiveness of the queen, my sister's wrongs;
A natural love unto my infant nephews:

Faith to the king, a faith he may need shortly,
In more than words; respect for Nimrod's line;
Also, another thing thou knowest not.

Sar. What's that?

Sal. To thee an unknown word.

Sar. Yet speak it;

I love to learn.

Sal. Virtue.

Sar. Not know the word!

Never was word yet rung so in my ears —

Worse than the rabble's shout, or splitting trumpet:
I've heard thy sister talk of nothing else. [vice.

Sal. To change the irksome theme, then, hear of

Sar. From whom?

Sal. Even from the winds, if thou couldst listen
Unto the echoes of the nation's voice.

Sar. Come, I'm indulgent, as thou knowest, pa-
tient, [thee?

As thou hast often proved — speak out, what moves

Sal. Thy peril.

Sar. Say on.

Sal. Thus, then: all the nations,
For they are many, whom thy father left
In heritage, are loud in wrath against thee.

Sar. 'Gainst *me*! What would the slaves?

Sal. A king.

Sar. And what

Am I then?

Sal. In their eyes a nothing; but
In mine a man who might be something still.

Sar. The railing drunkards! why, what would they have?

Have they not peace and plenty?

Sal. Of the first
More than is glorious; of the last, far less
Than the king reckes of.

Sar. Whose then is the crime,
But the false satraps, who provide no better? [looks

Sal. And somewhat in the monarch who ne'er
Beyond his palace walls, or if he stirs
Beyond them, 'tis but to some mountain palace,
Till summer heats wear down. O glorious Baal!
Who built up this vast empire, and wert made
A god, or at the least shimest like a god
Through the long centuries of thy renown,
This, thy presumed descendant, ne'er beheld
As king the kingdoms thou didst leave as hero,
Won with thy blood, and toil, and time, and peril!
For what? to furnish imposts for a revel,
Or multiplied extortions for a minion.

Sar. I understand thee — thou wouldst have me go
Forth as a conqueror. By all the stars
Which the Chaldeans read — the restless slaves *
Deserve that I should curse them with their
wishes,
And lead them forth to glory.

Sal. Wherefore not?
Semiramis — a woman only — led

* [MS. — "I have a mind
To curse the restless slaves with their own wishes."]

These our Assyrians to the solar shores
Of Ganges.

Sar. 'Tis most true. And *how* returned?

Sal. Why, like a *man* — a hero; baffled, but
Not vanquished. With but twenty guards, she made
Good her retreat to Bactria.

Sar. And how many
Left she behind in India to the vultures?

Sal. Our annals say not.

Sar. Then I will say for them —
That she had better woven within her palace
Some twenty garments, than with twenty guards
Have fled to Bactria, leaving to the ravens,
And wolves, and men — the fiercer of the three,
Her myriads of fond subjects. Is *this* glory?
Then let me live in ignominy ever.

Sal. All warlike spirits have not the same fate.
Semiramis, the glorious parent of
A hundred kings, although she failed in India,
Brought Persia, Media, Bactria, to the realm
Which she once swayed — and thou *might'st* sway.

Sar. I *sway* them —
She but subdued them.

Sal. It may be ere long
That they will need her sword more than your
sceptre.

Sar. There was a certain Bacchus, was there not?
I've heard my Greek girls speak of such — they say
He was a god, that is, a Grecian god,
An idol foreign to Assyria's worship,

Who conquered this same golden realm of Ind
Thou prat'st of, where Semiramis was vanquished.

Sal. I have heard of such a man; and thou
perceiv'st

That he is deemed a god for what he did.

Sar. And in his godship I will honor him —
Not much as man. What, ho! my cupbearer!

Sal. What means the king?

Sar. To worship your new god
And ancient conqueror. Some wine, I say.

Enter Cupbearer.

Sar. (*addressing the Cupbearer*). Bring me the
golden goblet thick with gems,
Which bears the name of Nimrod's chalice. Hence,
Fill full, and bear it quickly. [*Exit Cupbearer.*

Sal. Is this moment
A fitting one for the resumption of
Thy yet unslept-off revels?

Re-enter Cupbearer, with wine.

Sar. (*taking the cup from him*). Noble kinsman,
If these barbarian Greeks of the far shores
And skirts of these our realms lie not, this Bacchus
Conquered the whole of India, did he not?

Sal. He did, and thence was deemed a deity.*

Sar. Not so: — of all his conquests a few columns,
Which may be his, and might be mine, if I

* [MS. — 'He did, and thence was deemed a god in story.']

Thought them worth purchase and conveyance, are
The landmarks of the seas of gore he shed,
The realms he wasted, and the hearts he broke.
But here, here in this goblet is his title
To immortality — the immortal grape
From which he first expressed the soul, and gave
To gladden that of man, as some atonement
For the victorious mischiefs he had done.
Had it not been for this, he would have been
A mortal still in name as in his grave;
And, like my ancestor Semiramis,
A sort of semi-glorious human monster.
Here's that which deified him — let it now
Humanize thee; my surly, chiding brother,
Pledge me to the Greek god!

Sal. For all thy realms
I would not so blaspheme our country's creed.

Sar. That is to say, thou thinkest him a hero,
That he shed blood by oceans; and no god,
Because he turned a fruit to an enchantment,
Which cheers the sad, revives the old, inspires
The young, makes weariness forget his toil,
And fear her danger; opens a new world [thee
When this, the present, palls. Well, then *I* pledge
And *him* as a true man, who did his utmost
In good or evil to surprise mankind. [*Drinks*

Sal. Wilt thou resume a revel at this hour?

Sar. And if I did, 'twere better than a trophy,
Being bought without a tear. But that is not

My present purpose : since thou wilt not pledge me,
Continue what thou pleasest.

(*To the Cupbearer*).

Boy, retire.

[*Exit Cupbearer.*]

Sal. I would but have recalled thee from thy
dream ;

Better by me awakened than rebellion.

Sar. Who should rebel ? or why ? what cause ?
pretext ?

I am the lawful king, descended from
A race of kings who knew no predecessors.
What have I done to thee, or to the people,
That thou shouldst rail, or they rise up against me ?

Sal. Of what thou hast done to me, I speak not.

Sar. But
Thou think'st that I have wronged the queen : is 't
not so ?

Sal. *Think !* Thou hast wronged her ! *

Sar. Patience, prince, and hear me.
She has all power and splendor of her station,
Respect, the tutelage of Assyria's heirs,
The homage and the appanage of sovereignty.
I married her as monarchs wed — for state,
And loved her as most husbands love their wives.
If she or thou supposedst I could link me

* [In many parts of this play, it strikes me that Lord Byron has more in his eye the case of a sinful Christian that has but one wife, and a sly business or so which she and her kin do not approve of, than a bearded Oriental, like Sardanapalus, with three hundred wives and seven hundred concubines. -- HOGG.]

Like a Chaldean peasant to his mate,
Ye knew nor me, nor monarchs, nor mankind.

Sal. I pray thee, change the theme: my blood
disdains

Complaint, and Salemenes' sister seeks not
Reluctant love even from Assyria's lord!
Nor would she deign to accept divided passion
With foreign strumpets and Ionian slaves.
The queen is silent.

Sar. And why not her brother?

Sal. I only echo thee the voice of empires,
Which he who long neglects not long will govern.

Sar. The ungrateful and ungracious slaves! they
murmur

Because I have not shed their blood, nor led them
To dry into the desert's dust by myriads,
Or whiten with their bones the banks of Ganges;
Nor decimated them with savage laws,
Nor sweated them to build up pyramids,
Or Babylonian walls.

Sal. Yet these are trophies
More worthy of a people and their prince
Than songs, and lutes, and feasts, and concubines,
And lavished treasures, and contemned virtues.

Sar. Oh, for my trophies I have founded cities:
There's Tarsus and Anchialus, both built
In one day — what could that blood-loving bel-
dame,

My martial grandam, chaste Semiramis,
Do more, except destroy them?

Sal. 'Tis most true ;
I own thy merit in those founded cities,
Built for a whim, recorded with a verse
Which shames both them and thee to coming ages.

Sar. Shame me ! By Baal, the cities, though well
built,
Are not more goodly than the verse ! Say what
Thou wilt 'gainst me, my mode of life or rule,
But nothing 'gainst the truth of that brief record.
Why, those few lines contain the history
Of all things human : hear — “ Sardanapalus,
The king, and son of Anacyndaraxes,
In one day built Anchialus and Tarsus.
Eat, drink, and love ; the rest's not worth a fillip.”*

* “ For this expedition he took only a small chosen body of the phalanx, but all his light troops. In the first day's march he reached Anchialus, a town said to have been founded by the king of Assyria, Sardanapalus. The fortifications, in their magnitude and extent, still in Arrian's time, bore the character of greatness, which the Assyrians appear singularly to have affected in works of the kind. A monument representing Sardanapalus was found there, warranted by an inscription in Assyrian characters, of course in the old Assyrian language, which the Greeks, whether well or ill, interpreted thus : ‘ Sardanapalus, son of Anacyndaraxes, in one day founded Anchialus and Tarsus. Eat, drink, play : all other human joys are not worth a fillip.’ Supposing this version nearly exact (for Arrian says it was not quite so), whether the purpose has not been to invite to civil order a people disposed to turbulence, rather than to recommend immoderate luxury, may perhaps reasonably be questioned. What, indeed, could be the object of a king of Assyria in founding such towns in a country so distant from his capital, and so divided from it by an immense extent of sandy deserts and lofty mountains, and, still more, how the inhabitants could be at once

Sal. A worthy moral, and a wise inscription,
For a king to put up before his subjects !

Sar. Oh, thou wouldst have me doubtless set up
edicts —

“Obey the king — contribute to his treasure —
Recruit his phalanx — spill your blood at bidding —
Fall down and worship, or get up and toil.”
Or thus — “Sardanapalus on this spot
Slew fifty thousand of his enemies.
These are their sepulchres, and this his trophy.”
I leave such things to conquerors ; enough
For me, if I can make my subjects feel
The weight of human misery less, and glide
Ungroaning to the tomb : I take no license
Which I deny to them. We all are men.

Sal. Thy sires have been revered as gods —

in circumstances to abandon themselves to the intemperate joys which their prince has been supposed to have recommended, is not obvious : but it may deserve observation that, in that line of coast, the southern of Lesser Asia, ruins of cities, evidently of an age after Alexander, yet barely named in history, at this day astonish the adventurous traveller by their magnificence and elegance. Amid the desolation which, under a singularly barbarian government, has for so many centuries been daily spreading in the finest countries of the globe, whether more from soil and climate, or from opportunities for commerce, extraordinary means must have been found her communities to flourish there ; whence it may seem that the measures of Sardanapalus were directed by juster views than have been commonly ascribed to him : but that monarch having been the last of a dynasty, ended by a revolution, obloquy on his memory would follow of course from the policy of his successors and their partisans. The inconsistency of traditions concerning Sardanapalus is striking in Diodorus's account of him.” — MITFORD's *Greece*, vol. x. p. 311.

Sar. In dust
And death, where they are neither gods nor men.
Talk not of such to me! the worms are gods;
At least they banqueted upon your gods,
And died for lack of farther nutriment.
Those gods were merely men; look to their issue —
I feel a thousand mortal things about me,
But nothing godlike, — unless it may be
The thing which you condemn, a disposition
To love and to be merciful, to pardon
The follies of my species, and (that's human)
To be indulgent to my own.

Sal. Alas!
The doom of Nineveh is sealed. — Woe — woe
To the unrivalled city!

Sar. What dost dread?

Sal. Thou art guarded by thy foes: in a few hours
The tempest may break out which overwhelms thee,
And thine and mine; and in another day
What is shall be the past of Belus' race.

Sar. What must we dread?

Sal. Ambitious treachery,
Which has environed thee with snares; but yet
There is resource: empower me with thy signet
To quell the machinations, and I lay
The heads of thy chief foes before thy feet.

Sar. The heads — how many?

Sal. Must I stay to number
When even thine own's in peril? Let me go;
Give me thy signet — trust me with the rest.

Sar. I will trust no man with unlimited lives.
When we take those from others, we nor know
What we have taken, nor the thing we give.

Sal. Wouldst thou not take their lives who seek
for thine?

Sar. That's a hard question — But I answer, Yes.
Cannot the thing be done without? Who are they
Whom thou suspectest? — Let them be arrested.

Sal. I would thou wouldst not ask me; the next
moment

Will send my answer through thy babbling troop
Of paramours, and thence fly o'er the palace,
Even to the city, and so baffle all. —
Trust me.

Sar. Thou knowest I have done so ever:
Take thou the signet. [*Gives the signet.*

Sal. I have one more request. —

Sar. Name it.

Sal. That thou this night forbear the banquet
In the pavilion over the Euphrates. [*plotters*

Sar. Forbear the banquet! Not for all the
That ever shook a kingdom! Let them come,
And do their worst: I shall not blench for them;
Nor rise the sooner; nor forbear the goblet;
Nor crown me with a single rose the less;
Nor lose one joyous hour. — I fear them not.

Sal. But thou wouldst arm thee, wouldst thou
not, if needful?

Sar. Perhaps. I have the goodliest armor, and
A sword of such a temper; and a bow .

And javelin, which might furnish Nimrod forth :
A little heavy, but yet not unwieldy.
And now I think on 't, 't is long since I've used them.
Even in the chase. Hast ever seen them, brother ?

Sal. Is this a time for such fantastic trifling ? —
If need be, wilt thou wear them ?

Sar.

Will I not ?

Oh ! if it must be so, and these rash slaves
Will not be ruled with less, I'll use the sword
Till they shall wish it turned into a distaff.

Sal. They say thy sceptre's turned to that already.

Sar. That's false ! but let them say so : the old
Greeks,

Of whom our captives often sing, related
The same of their chief hero, Hercules,
Because he loved a Lydian queen : thou seest
The populace of all the nations seize
Each calumny they can to sink their sovereigns.

Sal. They did not speak thus of thy fathers.

Sar.

No ;

They dared not. They were kept to toil and combat ;
And never changed their chains but for their armor.
Now they have peace and pastime, and the license
To revel and to rail ; it irks me not.

I would not give the smile of one fair girl
For all the popular breath that e'er divided
A name from nothing. What are the rank tongues
Of this vile herd, grown insolent with feeding,
That I should prize their noisy praise, or dread
Their noisome clamor ?

Sal. You have said they are men ;
As such their hearts are something.

Sar. So my dogs' are ; *
And better, as more faithful : — but, proceed ;
Thou hast my signet : — since they are tumultuous,
Let them be tempered, yet not roughly, till
Necessity enforce it. I hate all pain,
Given or received ; we have enough within us,
The meanest vassal as the loftiest monarch,
Not to add to each other's natural burden
Of mortal misery, but rather lessen,
By mild reciprocal alleviation,
The fatal penalties imposed on life :
But this they know not, or they will not know.
I have, by Baal ! done all I could to soothe them :
I made no wars, I added no new imposts,
I interfered not with their civic lives,
I let them pass their days as best might suit them,
Passing my own as suited me.

Sal. Thou stopp'st
Short of the duties of a king ; and therefore
They say thou art unfit to be a monarch.

Sar. They lie. — Unhappily, I am unfit
To be aught save a monarch ; else for me
The meanest Mede might be the king instead. [so.

Sal. There is one Mede, at least, who seeks to be

Sar. What mean'st thou ? — 'tis thy secret ; thou
desirest

Few questions, and I'm not of curious nature.

* [See Vol. I. *ante*, p. 221.]

Take the fit steps ; and, since necessity
Requires, I sanction and support thee. Ne'er
Was man who more desired to rule in peace
The peaceful only : if they rouse me, better
They had conjured up stern Nimrod from his ashes,
"The mighty hunter." I will turn these realms
To one wide desert chase of brutes, who *were*,
But *would* no more, by their own choice, be human.
What they have found me, they belie ; *that which*
They yet may find me — shall defy their wish
To speak it worse ; and let them thank themselves.

Sal. Then thou at last canst feel ?

Sar. Feel ! who feels not
Ingratitude ?

Sal. I will not pause to answer
With words, but deeds. Keep thou awake that energy
Which sleeps at times, but is not dead within thee,
And thou may'st yet be glorious in thy reign,
As powerful in thy realm. Farewell !

[*Exit* SALEMENES.

Sar. (*solus*). Farewell !
He's gone ; and on his finger bears my signet,
Which is to him a sceptre. He is stern
As I am heedless ; and the slaves deserve
To feel a master. What may be the danger,
I know not : he hath found it, let him quell it.
Must I consume my life — this little life —
In guarding against all may make it less ? *

* [The epicurean philosophy of Sardanapalus gives him a fine opportunity, in his conferences with his stern and confidential

It is not worth so much ! It were to die
Before my hour, to live in dread of death,
Tracing revolt ; suspecting all about me,
Because they are near ; and all who are remote,
Because they are far. But if it should be so —
If they should sweep me off from earth and empire,
Why, what is earth or empire of the earth ?
I have loved, and lived, and multiplied my image :
To die is no less natural than those
Acts of this clay ! 'Tis true I have not shed
Blood as I might have done, in oceans, till
My name became the synonyme of death —
A terror and a trophy. But for this
I feel no penitence ; my life is love :
If I must shed blood, it shall be by force.
Till now, no drop from an Assyrian vein
Hath flowed for me, nor hath the smallest coin
Of Nineveh's vast treasures e'er been lavished
On objects which could cost her sons a tear :
If then they hate me, 'tis because I hate not :
If they rebel, 'tis because I oppress not.
Oh, men ! ye must be ruled with scythes, not sceptres,
And mowed down like the grass, else all we reap
Is rank abundance, and a rotten harvest
Of discontents infecting the fair soil,
Making a desert of fertility. —
I'll think no more. — Within there, ho !

adviser, Salemenes, to contrast his own imputed and fatal vices of ease and love of pleasure with the boasted virtues of his predecessors, war and conquest. — JEFFREY.]

Enter an ATTENDANT.

Sar. Slave, tell
The Ionian Myrrha we would crave her presence.

Attend. King, she is here.

MYRRHA enters.

Sar. (apart to Attendant). Away!
(*Addressing MYRRHA.*) Beautiful being!
Thou dost almost anticipate my heart;
It throbbed for thee, and here thou comest: let me
Deem that some unknown influence, some sweet
oracle,
Communicates between us, though unseen,
In absence, and attracts us to each other.

Myr. There doth.

Sar. I know there doth, but not its name:
What is it?

Myr. In my native land a God,
And in my heart a feeling like a God's,
Exalted; yet I own 'tis only mortal;
For what I feel is humble, and yet happy —
That is, it would be happy; but —

[*MYRRHA pauses.*

Sar. There comes
For ever something between us and what
We deem our happiness: let me remove
The barrier which that hesitating accent
Proclaims to thine, and mine is sealed.

Myr. My lord! —

Sar. My lord — my king — sire — sovereign; thus
it is —

For ever thus, addressed with awe. I ne'er
Can see a smile, unless in some broad banquet's
Intoxicating glare, when the buffoons
Have gorged themselves up to equality,
Or I have quaffed me down to their abasement.
Myrrha, I can hear all these things, these names,
Lord — king — sire — monarch — nay, time was I
prized them ;
That is, I suffered them — from slaves and nobles ;
But when they falter from the lips I love,
The lips which have been pressed to mine, a chill
Comes o'er my heart, a cold sense of the falsehood
Of this my station, which represses feeling
In those for whom I have felt most, and makes me
Wish that I could lay down the dull tiara,
And share a cottage on the Caucasus
With thee, and wear no crowns but those of
flowers.

Myr. Would that we could !

Sar. And dost *thou* feel this ? — Why ?

Myr. Then thou wouldst know what thou canst
never know.

Sar. And that is —

Myr. The true value of a heart ;
At least, a woman's.

Sar. I have proved a thousand —
A thousand, and a thousand.

Myr. Hearts ?

Sar. I think so.

Myr. Not one ! the time may come thou may'st.

Sar.

It will.

Hear, Myrrha; Salemenes has declared —
Or why or how he hath divined it, Belus,
Who founded our great realm, knows more than I —
But Salemenes hath declared my throne
In peril.

Myr. He did well.*Sar.*And say'st *thou* so?

Thou whom he spurned so harshly, and now dared *
Drive from our presence with his savage jeers,
And made thee weep and blush?

Myr.

I should do both

More frequently, and he did well to call me
Back to my duty. But thou spakest of peril —
Peril to thee —

Sar.

Ay, from dark plots and snares
From Medes — and discontented troops and nations.
I know not what — a labyrinth of things —
A maze of muttered threats and mysteries:
Thou know'st the man — it is his usual custom.
But he is honest. Come, we'll think no more on't —
But of the midnight festival.

Myr.

'Tis time

To think of aught save festivals. Thou hast not
Spurned his sage cautions?

Sar.

What? — and dost thou fear?

Myr. Fear? — I'm a Greek, and how should I
fear death?

A slave, and wherefore should I dread my freedom?

* [MS.

—— “and even dared

Profane our presence with his savage jeers.’]

Sar. Then wherefore dost thou turn so pale?

Myr. I love.

Sar. And do not I? I love thee far — far more
Than either the brief life or the wide realm,
Which, it may be, are menaced; — yet I blench not.

Myr. That means thou lovest not thyself nor me;
For he who loves another loves himself,
Even for that other's sake. This is too rash:
Kingdoms and lives are not to be so lost.

Sar. Lost! — why, who is the aspiring chief who
dared
Assume to win them?

Myr. Who is he should dread
To try so much? When he who is their ruler
Forgets himself, will they remember him?

Sar. Myrrha!

Myr. Frown not upon me: you have smiled
Too often on me not to make those frowns
Bitterer to bear than any punishment
Which they may augur. — King, I am your subject!
Master, I am your slave! Man, I have loved you! —
Loved you, I know not by what fatal weakness,
Although a Greek, and born a foe to monarchs —
A slave, and hating fetters — an Ionian,
And, therefore, when I love a stranger, more
Degraded by that passion than by chains!
Still I have loved you. If that love were strong
Enough to overcome all former nature,
Shall it not claim the privilege to save you?

Sar. Save me, my beauty! Thou art very fair,
And what I seek of thee is love — not safety.

Myr. And without love where dwells security?

Sar. I speak of woman's love.

Myr. The very first
Of human life must spring from woman's breast,
Your first small words are taught you from her lips,
Your first tears quenched by her, and your last sighs
Too often breathed out in a woman's hearing,
When men have shrunk from the ignoble care
Of watching the last hour of him who led them.

Sar. My eloquent Ionian! thou speak'st music,
The very chorus of the tragic song*
I have heard thee talk of as the favorite pastime
Of thy far father-land. Nay, weep not — calm thee.

Myr. I weep not. — But I pray thee, do not speak
About my fathers or their land.

Sar. Yet oft
Thou speakest of them.

Myr. True — true: constant thought
Will overflow in words unconsciously;
But when another speaks of Greece, it wounds me.

Sar. Well, then, how wouldst thou *save* me, as
thou saidst?

Myr. By teaching thee to save thyself, and not
Thyself alone, but these vast realms, from all
The rage of the worst war — the war of brethren.

* [To speak of "the tragic song" as the favorite pastime of Greece, two hundred years before Thespis, is an anachronism. Nor could Myrrha, at so early a period of her country's history, have spoken of their national hatred of kings, or of that which was equally the growth of a later age, — their contempt for "barbarians." — HEBER.]

Sar. Why, child, I loathe all war, and warriors ;
I live in peace and pleasure : what can man
Do more ?

Myr. Alas ! my lord, with common men
There needs too oft the show of war to keep
The substance of sweet peace ; and, for a king,
'Tis sometimes better to be feared than loved.

Sar. And I have never sought but for the last.

Myr. And now art neither.

Sar. Dost *thou* say so, Myrrha ?

Myr. I speak of civic popular love, *self-love*,
Which means that men are kept in awe and law,
Yet not oppressed — at least they must not think so ;
Or if they think so, deem it necessary,
To ward off worse oppression, their own passions.
A king of feasts, and flowers, and wine, and revel,
And love, and mirth, was never king of glory.

Sar. Glory ! what's that ?

Myr. Ask of the gods thy fathers.

Sar. They cannot answer ; when the priests
speak for them,

'Tis for some small addition to the temple.

Myr. Look to the annals of thine empire's found-
ers.

Sar. They are so blotted o'er with blood, I
cannot.

But what wouldst have ? the empire *has been* founded.
I cannot go on multiplying empires.

Myr. Preserve thine own.

Sar. At least, I will enjoy it.

Come, Myrrha, let us go on to the Euphrates :
The hour invites, the galley is prepared,
And the pavilion, decked for our return,
In fit adornment for the evening banquet,
Shall blaze with beauty and with light, until
It seems unto the stars which are above us
Itself an opposite star ; and we will sit
Crowned with fresh flowers like ——

Myr.

Victims.

Sar.

No, like sovereigns,
The shepherd kings of patriarchal times,
Who knew no brighter gems than summer wreaths,*
And none but tearless triumphs. Let us on.

Enter PANIA.

Pan. May the king live for ever !

Sar.

Not an hour

Longer than he can love. How my soul hates
This language, which makes life itself a lie,
Flattering dust with eternity.† Well, Pania!
Be brief.

Pan. I am charged by Salemenes to
Reiterate his prayer unto the king,
That for this day, at least, he will not quit
The palace : when the general returns,
He will adduce such reasons as will warrant
His daring, and perhaps obtain the pardon
Of his presumption.

* [MS. — “ Who loved no gems so well as those of nature.”]

† [MS. — “ Wishing eternity to dust.”]

Sar. What! am I then cooped?
Already captive? can I not even breathe
The breath of heaven? Tell prince Salemenes,
Were all Assyria raging round the walls
In mutinous myriads, I would still go forth.

Pan. I must obey, and yet —

Myr. Oh, monarch, listen. —
How many a day and moon thou hast reclined
Within these palace walls in silken dalliance,
And never shown thee to thy people's longing;
Leaving thy subjects' eyes ungratified,
The satraps uncontrolled, the gods unworshipped,
And all things in the anarchy of sloth,
Till all, save evil, slumbered through the realm!
And wilt thou not now tarry for a day, —
A day which may redeem thee? Wilt thou not
Yield to the few still faithful for a few hours,
For them, for thee, for thy past father's race.
And for thy son's inheritance?

Pan. 'Tis true!
From the deep urgency with which the prince
Despatched me to your sacred presence, I
Must dare to add my feeble voice to that
Which now has spoken.

Sar. No, it must not be.

Myr. For the sake of thy realm!

Sar. Away!

Pan. For that
Of all thy faithful subjects, who will rally
Round thee and thine.

Sar. These are mere fantasies ;
'There is no peril : — 'tis a sullen scheme
Of Salemenes, to approve his zeal,
And show himself more necessary to us. [counsel.

Myr. By all that's good and glorious take this

Sar. Business to-morrow.

Myr. Ay, or death to-night.

Sar. Why let it come then unexpectedly.
'Midst joy and gentleness, and mirth and love ;
So let me fall like the plucked rose ! — far better
Thus than be withered.

Myr. Then thou wilt not yield,
Even for the sake of all that ever stirred
A monarch into action, to forego
A trifling revel.

Sar. No.

Myr. Then yield for *mine* ;
For my sake !

Sar. Thine, my Myrrha !

Myr. 'Tis the first
Boon which I ever asked Assyria's king. [granted.

Sar. That's true, and wer't my kingdom must be
Well, for thy sake, I yield me. Pania, hence !
Thou hear'st me.

Pan. And obey. [Exit PANIA.

Sar. I marvel at thee.
What is thy motive, Myrrha, thus to urge me ?

Myr. Thy safety ; and the certainty that nought
Could urge the prince thy kinsman to require
Thus much from thee, but some impending danger.

Sar. And if I do not dread it, why shouldst thou?

Myr. Because *thou* dost not fear, I fear for *thee*.

Sar. To-morrow thou wilt smile at these vain
fancies.

Myr. If the worst come, I shall be where none
weep,

And that is better than the power to smile.

And thou?

Sar. I shall be king, as heretofore.

Myr. Where?

Sar. With Baal, Nimrod, and Semiramis,
Sole in Assyria, or with them elsewhere.

Fate made me what I am — may make me nothing —

But either that or nothing must I be :

I will not live degraded.

Myr. Hadst thou felt
Thus always, none would ever dare degrade thee.

Sar. And who will do so now?

Myr. Dost thou suspect none?

Sar. Suspect! — that's a spy's office. Oh! we
lose

Ten thousand precious moments in vain words,
And vainer fears. Within there! — ye slaves, deck
The hall of Nimrod for the evening revel :

If I must make a prison of our palace,

At least we'll wear our fetters jocundly ;

If the Euphrates be forbid us, and

The summer dwelling on its beauteous border,

Here we are still unmenaced. Ho! within there!

[*Exit* SARDANAPALUS.]

Myr. (sola). Why do I love this man? My
country's daughters
Love none but heroes. But I have no country!
The slave hath lost all save her bonds. I love him;
And that's the heaviest link of the long chain —
To love whom we esteem not. Be it so:
The hour is coming when he'll need all love,
And find none. To fall from him now were baser
Than to have stabbed him on his throne when
highest
Would have been noble in my country's creed:
I was not made for either. Could I save him,
I should not love *him* better, but myself;
And I have need of the last, for I have fallen
In my own thoughts, by loving this soft stranger:
And yet methinks I love him more, perceiving
That he is hated of his own barbarians,
The natural foes of all the blood of Greece.
Could I but wake a single thought like those
Which even the Phrygians felt when battling long
'Twixt Ilion and the sea, within his heart,
He would tread down the barbarous crowds, and
triumph.
He loves me, and I love him; the slave loves
Her master, and would free him from his vices.
If not, I have a means of freedom still,
And if I cannot teach him how to reign,
May show him how alone a king can leave
His throne. I must not lose him from my sight.

[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The Portal of the same Hall of the Palace.

Beleses (solus). The sun goes down : methinks he
sets more slowly,

Taking his last look of Assyria's empire.
How red he glares amongst those deepening clouds,
Like the blood he predicts. If not in vain,
Thou sun that sinkest, and ye stars which rise,
I have outwatched ye, reading ray by ray
The edicts of your orbs, which make Time tremble
For what he brings the nations, 'tis the furthest
Hour of Assyria's years. And yet how calm !
An earthquake should announce so great a fall —
A summer's sun discloses it. Yon disk,
To the star-read Chaldean, bears upon
Its everlasting page the end of what
Seemed everlasting ; but oh ! thou true sun !
The burning oracle of all that live,
As fountain of all life, and symbol of
Him who bestows it, wherefore dost thou limit
Thy lore unto calamity ? Why not
Unfold the rise of days more worthy thine
All-glorious burst from ocean ? why not dart
A beam of hope athwart the future years,
As of wrath to its days ? Hear me ! oh, hear me !
I am thy worshipper, thy priest, thy servant —

I have gazed on thee at thy rise and fall,
And bowed my head beneath thy mid-day beams,
When my eye dared not meet thee. I have watched
For thee, and after thee, and prayed to thee,
And sacrificed to thee, and read, and feared thee,
And asked of thee, and thou hast answered — but
Only to thus much: while I speak, he sinks —
Is gone — and leaves his beauty, not his knowledge,
To the delighted west, which revels in
Its hues of dying glory. Yet what is
Death, so it be but glorious? 'Tis a sunset;
And mortals may be happy to resemble
The gods but in decay.

Enter ARBACES, by an inner door.

Arb. Beleses, why
So rapt in thy devotions? Dost thou stand
Gazing to trace thy disappearing god
Into some realm of undiscovered day?
Our business is with night — 'tis come.

Bel. But not
Gone.

Arb. Let it roll on — we are ready.

Bel. Yes.
Would it were over!

Arb. Does the prophet doubt,
To whom the very stars shine victory?

Bel. I do not doubt of victory — but the victor.

Arb. Well, let thy science settle that. Mean-
time

I have prepared as many glittering spears
As will out-sparkle our allies — your planets.
There is no more to thwart us. The she-king,
That less than woman, is even now upon
The waters with his female mates. The order
Is issued for the feast in the pavilion.
The first cup which he drains will be the last
Quaffed by the line of Nimrod.

Bel. 'Twas a brave one.

Arb. And is a weak one — 'tis worn out — we'll
mend it.

Bel. Art sure of that?

Arb. Its founder was a hunter —
I am soldier — what is there to fear?

Bel. The soldier.

Arb. And the priest, it may be : but
If you thought thus, or think, why not retain
Your king of concubines? why stir me up?
Why spur me to this enterprise? your own
No less than mine?

Bel. Look to the sky!

Arb. I look.

Bel. What seest thou?

Arb. A fair summer's twilight, and
The gathering of the stars.

Bel. And midst them, mark
Yon earliest, and the brightest, which so quivers,
As it would quit its place in the blue ether.

Arb. Well?

Bel. 'Tis thy natal ruler — thy birth planet.

Arb. (*touching his scabbard*). My star is in this
scabbard: when it shines,
It shall out-dazzle comets. Let us think
Of what is to be done to justify
Thy planets and their portents. When we conquer,
They shall have temples — ay, and priests — and
thou
Shalt be the pontiff of — what gods thou wilt;
For I observe that they are ever just,
And own the bravest for the most devout.

Bel. Ay, and the most devout for brave — thou
hast not
Seen me turn back from battle.

Arb. No; I own thee
As firm in fight as Babylonia's captain,
As skilful in Chaldea's worship: now,
Will it but please thee to forget the priest,
And be the warrior?

Bel. Why not both?

Arb. The better:
And yet it almost shames me, we shall have
So little to effect. This woman's warfare
Degrades the very conqueror. To have plucked
A bold and bloody despot from his throne,
And grappled with him, clashing steel with steel,
That were heroic or to win or fall;
But to upraise my sword against this silkworm,
And hear him whine, it may be —

Bel. Do not deem it:
He has that in him which may make you strife yet;

And were he all you think, his guards are hardy,
And headed by the cool, stern Salemenes.

Arb. They'll not resist.

Bel. Why not? they are soldiers.

Arb. True,
And therefore need a soldier to command them.

Bel. That Salemenes is.

Arb. But not their king.
Besides, he hates the effeminate thing that governs,
For the queen's sake, his sister. Mark you not
He keeps aloof from all the revels?

Bel. But
Not from the council — there he is ever constant.

Arb. And ever thwarted: what would you have
more

To make a rebel out of? A fool reigning,
His blood dishonored, and himself disdained:
Why, it is *his* revenge we work for.

Bel. Could
He but be brought to think so: this I doubt of.

Arb. What, if we sound him?

Bel. Yes — if the time served.

Enter BALEA.

Bal. Satraps! The king commands your pres-
ence at
The feast to-night.

Bel. To hear is to obey.
In the pavilion?

Bal. No; here in the palace.

Arb. How! in the palace? it was not thus ordered.

Bal. It is so ordered now.

Arb. And why?

Bal. I know not:

May I retire?

Arb. Stay.

Bel. (*to Arb. aside*). Hush! let him go his way.

(*Alternately to Bal.*) Yes Balea, thank the monarch,
kiss the hem

Of his imperial robe, and say, his slaves
Will take the crumbs he deigns to scatter from
His royal table at the hour — was't midnight?

Bal. It was: the place, the hall of Nimrod. Lords,
I humble me before you, and depart. [*Exit BALEA.*]

Arb. I like not this same sudden change of place;
There is some mystery: wherefore should he change
it?

Bel. Doth he not change a thousand times a day?
Sloth is of all things the most fanciful —
And moves more parasangs in its intents
Than generals in their marches, when they seek
To leave their foe at fault. — Why dost thou muse?

Arb. He loved that gay pavilion, — it was ever
His summer dotage.

Bel. And he loved his queen —
And thrice a thousand harlotry besides —
And he has loved all things by turns, except
Wisdom and glory.

Arb. Still — I like it not.
If he has changed — why, so must we: the attack

Were easy in the isolated bower,
Beset with drowsy guards and drunken courtiers;
But in the hall of Nimrod ——

Bel. Is it so?

Methought the haughty soldier feared to mount
A throne too easily — does it disappoint thee
To find there is a slipperier step or two
Than what was counted on?

Arb. When the hour comes,
Thou shalt perceive how far I fear or no. [for:
Thou hast seen my life at stake — and gaily played
But here is more upon the die — a kingdom.

Bel. I have foretold already — thou wilt win it
Then on, and prosper.

Arb. Now were I a soothsayer,
I would have boded so much to myself.
But be the stars obeyed — I cannot quarrel
With them, nor their interpreter. Who's here?

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. Satraps!

Bel. My prince!

Sal. Well met — I sought ye both,
But elsewhere than the palace.

Arb. Wherefore so?

Sal. 'Tis not the hour.

Arb. The hour! — what hour?

Sal. Of midnight.

Bel. Midnight, my lord!

Sal. What, are you not invited?

Bel. Oh! yes — we had forgotten.

Sal. Is it usual

Thus to forget a sovereign's invitation?

Arb. Why — we but now received it.

Sal. Then why here?

Arb. On duty.

Sal. On what duty?

Bel. On the state's.

We have the privilege to approach the presence;

But found the monarch absent.*

Sal. And I too

Am upon duty.

Arb. May we crave its purport?

Sal. To arrest two traitors. Guards! Within there!

Enter Guards.

Sal. (*continuing*). Satraps,
Your swords.

Bel. (*delivering his*). My lord, behold my scimitar.

Arb. (*drawing his sword*). Take mine.

Sal. (*advancing*). I will.

Arb. But in your heart the blade —
The hilt quits not this hand.†

Sal. (*drawing*). How! dost thou brave me?
'Tis well — this saves a trial, and false mercy.
Soldiers, hew down the rebel!

* [MS. — "But found the monarch claimed his privacy."]

† [MS. — "not else

It quits this living hand."]

Arb. Soldiers! Ay —
Alone you dare not.

Sal. Alone! foolish slave —
What is there in thee that a prince should shrink
from
Of open force? We dread thy treason, not
Thy strength: thy tooth is nought without its
venom —

The serpent's, not the lion's. Cut him down.

Bel. (interposing). Arbaces! Are you mad?
Have I not rendered
My sword? Then trust like me our sovereign's
justice.

Arb. No — I will sooner trust the stars thou
prat'st of,
And this slight arm, and die a king at least
Of my own breath and body — so far that
None else shall claim them.

Sal. (to the Guards). You hear *him* and *me*.
Take him not, — kill.

[*The Guards attack ARBACES, who defends himself valiantly and dexterously till they waver.*

Sal. Is it even so; and must
I do the hangman's office? Recreants! see
How you should fell a traitor.

[SALEMENES attacks ARBACES.

Enter SARDANAPALUS and Train.

Sar. Hold your hands —
Upon your lives, I say. What, deaf or drunken?

My sword! Oh fool, I wear no sword: here, fellow,
Give me thy weapon. *[To a Guard.*

*[SARDANAPALUS snatches a sword from one of the
soldiers, and rushes between the combatants —
they separate.*

Sar. In my very palace!
What hinders me from cleaving you in twain,
Audacious brawlers?

Bel. Sire, your justice.

Sal. Or —
Your weakness.

Sar. (raising the sword). How?

Sal. Strike! so the blow's repeated
Upon yon traitor — whom you spare a moment,
I trust, for torture — I'm content.

Sar. What — him!
Who dares assail Arbaces?

Sal. I!

Sar. Indeed!
Prince, you forget yourself. Upon what warrant?

Sal. (showing the signet). Thine.

Arb. (confused). The king's!

Sal. Yes! and let the king confirm it.

Sar. I parted not from this for such a purpose.

Sal. You parted with it for your safety — I
Employed it for the best. Pronounce in person.
Here I am but your slave — a moment past
I was your representative.

Sar. Then sheathe
Your swords.

[ARBACES and SALEMENES return their swords to the scabbards.

Sal. Mine's sheathed; I pray you sheathe *not* yours:

'Tis the sole sceptre left you now with safety.

Sar. A heavy one; the hilt, too, hurts my hand.
(*To a Guard*). Here, fellow, take thy weapon back.

Well, sirs,
What doth this mean?

Bel. The prince must answer that.

Sal. Truth upon my part, treason upon theirs.

Sar. Treason — Arbaces! treachery and Beleses!
That were an union I will not believe.

Bel. Where is the proof?

Sal. I'll answer that, if once
The king demands your fellow-traitor's sword.

Arb. (*to Sal.*) A sword which hath been drawn
as oft as thine
Against his foes.

Sal. And now against his brother,
And in an hour or so against himself.

Sar. That is not possible: he dared not; no —
No — I'll not hear of such things. These vain
bickerings

Are spawned in courts by base intrigues, and baser
Hirelings, who live by lies on good men's lives.
You must have been deceived, my brother.

Sal. First
Let him deliver up his weapon, and

Proclaim himself your subject by that duty,
And I will answer all.

Sar. Why, if I thought so —
But no, it cannot be: the Mede Arbaces —
The trusty, rough, true soldier — the best captain
Of all who discipline our nations — No,
I'll not insult him thus, to bid him render
The scimitar to me he never yielded
Unto our enemies. Chief, keep your weapon.

Sal. (*delivering back the signet*). Monarch, take
back your signet.

Sar. No, retain it;
But use it with more moderation.

Sal. Sire,
I used it for your honor, and restore it
Because I cannot keep it with my own.
Bestow it on Arbaces.

Sar. So I should:
He never asked it.

Sal. Doubt not, he will have it,
Without that hollow semblance of respect.

Bel. I know not what hath prejudiced the prince
So strongly 'gainst two subjects, than whom none
Have been more zealous for Assyria's weal.

Sal. Peace, factious priest, and faithless soldier!
thou
Unit'st in thy own person the worst vices
Of the most dangerous orders of mankind.
Keep thy smooth words and juggling homilies
For those who know thee not. Thy fellow's sin

Is, at the least, a bold one, and not tempered
By the tricks taught thee in Chaldea.

Bel. Hear him,
My liege — the son of Belus! he blasphemes
The worship of the land, which bows the knee
Before your fathers.

Sar. Oh! for that I pray you
Let him have absolution. I dispense with
The worship of dead men; feeling that I
Am mortal, and believing that the race
From whence I sprung are — what I see them —
ashes.

Bel. King! Do not deem so: they are with the
stars,
And ——

Sar. You shall join them there ere they will rise,
If you preach further — Why, *this* is rank treason.

Sal. My lord!

Sar. To school me in the worship of
Assyria's idols! Let him be released —
Give him his sword.

Sal. My lord, and king, and brother,
I pray ye pause.

Sar. Yes, and be sermonized,
And dinned, and deafened with dead men and Baal,
And all Chaldea's starry mysteries.

Bel. Monarch! respect them.

Sar. Oh! for that — I love them:
I love to watch them in the deep blue vault,
And to compare them with my Myrrha's eyes;

I love to see their rays redoubled in
The tremulous silver of Euphrates' wave,
As the light breeze of midnight crisps the broad
And rolling water, sighing through the sedges
Which fringe his banks: but whether they may be
Gods, as some say, or the abodes of gods,
As others hold, or simply lamps of night,
Worlds, or the lights of worlds, I know nor care not.
There's something sweet in my uncertainty
I would not change for your Chaldean lore;
Besides, I know of these all clay can know
Of aught above it, or below it — nothing.
I see their brilliancy and feel their beauty — *
When they shine on my grave I shall know neither.

Bel. For *neither*, sire, say *better*.

Sar. I will wait,
If it so please you, pontiff, for that knowledge.
In the mean time receive your sword, and know
That I prefer your service militant
Unto your ministry — not loving either.

Sal. (*aside.*) His lusts have made him mad.
Then must I save him,
Spite of himself.

Sar. Please you to hear me, Satraps!
And chiefly thou, my priest, because I doubt thee
More than the soldier; and would doubt thee all
Wert thou not half a warrior: let us part
In peace — I'll not say pardon — which must be
Earned by the guilty; this I'll not pronounce ye,

* [MS. — "I know them beautiful, and see them brilliant."]

Although upon this breath of mine depends
Your own ; and, deadlier for ye, on my fears.
But fear not — for that I am soft, not fearful —
And so live on. Were I the thing some think me,
Your heads would now be dripping the last drops
Of their attainted gore from the high gates
Of this our palace, into the dry dust,
Their only portion of the coveted kingdom
They would be crowned to reign o'er—let that
pass.

As I have said, I will not *deem* ye guilty,
Nor *doom* ye guiltless. Albeit better men
Than ye or I stand ready to arraign you ;
And should I leave your fate to sterner judges,
And proofs of all kinds, I might sacrifice
Two men, who, whatsoe'er they now are, were
Once honest. Ye are free, sirs.

Arb. Sire, this clemency —

Bel. (*interrupting him*). Is worthy of yourself
and, although innocent,

We thank —

Sar. Priest! keep your thanksgivings for Belus ;
His offspring needs none.

Bel. But being innocent —

Sar. Be silent — Guilt is loud. If ye are loyal,
Ye are injured men, and should be sad, not grateful.

Bel. So we should be, were justice always done
By earthly power omnipotent ; but innocence
Must oft receive her right as a mere favor.

Sar. That's a good sentence for a homily,

Though not for this occasion. Prithee keep it
To plead thy sovereign's cause before his people.

Bel. I trust there is no cause.

Sar. No cause, perhaps ;

But many causers : — if ye meet with such
In the exercise of your inquisitive function
On earth, or should you read of it in heaven
In some mysterious twinkle of the stars,
Which are your chronicles, I pray you note,
That there are worse things betwixt earth and
heaven

Than him who ruleth many and slays none ;
And, hating not himself, yet loves his fellows
Enough to spare even those who would not spare
him

Were they once masters — but that's doubtful.
Satraps !

Your swords and persons are at liberty
To use them as ye will — but from this hour
I have no call for either. Salemenes,
Follow me. *

[*Exeunt* SARDANAPALUS, SALEMENES, *and the*
Train, etc. leaving ARBACES *and* BELESES.

Arb. Beleses !

* [The second Act is, we think, a failure. The conspirators have a tedious dialogue, which is interrupted by Salemenes with a guard. Salemenes is followed by the king, who reverses all his measures, pardons Arbaces, because he will not believe him guilty, and Beleses, in order to escape from his long speeches about the national religion. This incident only is well managed. — HEBER.]

Bel. Now, what think you?

Arb. That we are lost.

Bel. That we have won the kingdom.

Arb. What? thus suspected — with the sword
slung o'er us

But by a single hair, and that still wavering,
To be blown down by his imperious breath
Which spared us — why, I know not.

Bel. Seek not why;

But let us profit by the interval.

The hour is still our own — our power the same —
The night the same we destined. He hath changed
Nothing except our ignorance of all
Suspicion into such a certainty
As must make madness of delay.

Arb. And yet ——

Bel. What, doubting still?

Arb. He spared our lives, nay, more,
Saved them from Salemenes.

Bel. And how long
Will he so spare? till the first drunken minute.

Arb. Or sober, rather. Yet he did it nobly;
Gave royally what we had forfeited
Basely ——

Bel. Say bravely.

Arb. Somewhat of both, perhaps.
But it has touched me, and, whate'er betide,
I will no further on.

Bel. And lose the world!

Arb. Lose any thing except my own esteem.

Bel. I blush that we should owe our lives to such
A king of distaffs!

Arb. But no less we owe them;
And I should blush far more to take the grantor's!

Bel. Thou may'st endure whate'er thou wilt — the
Have written otherwise. [stars]

Arb. Though they came down,
And marshalled me the way in all their brightness,
I would not follow.

Bel. This is weakness — worse
Than a scared beldam's dreaming of the dead,
And waking in the dark. — Go to — go to.

Arb. Methought he looked like Nimrod as he spoke,
Even as the proud imperial statue stands
Looking the monarch of the kings around it,
And sways, while they but ornament, the temple.

Bel. I told you that you had too much despised him,
And that there was some royalty within him —
What then? he is the nobler foe.

Arb. But we
The meaner. — Would he had not spared us!

Bel. So —
Wouldst thou be sacrificed thus readily?

Arb. No — but it had been better to have died
Than live ungrateful.

Bel. Oh, the souls of some men!
'Thou wouldst digest what some call treason, and
Fools treachery — and, behold, upon the sudden,
Because for something or for nothing, this
Rash reveller steps, ostentatiously,

'T wixt thee and Salemenes, thou art turned
Into — what shall I say? — Sardanapalus!
I know no name more ignominious.

Arb.

But

An hour ago, who dared to term me such
Had held his life but lightly — as it is,
I must forgive you, even as he forgave us —
Semiramis herself would not have done it. [dom,

Bel. No — the queen liked no sharers of the king-
Not even a husband.

Arb.

I must serve him truly —

Bel. And humbly?

Arb.

No, sir, proudly — being honest.

I shall be nearer thrones than you to heaven;

And if not quite so haughty, yet more lofty.

You may do your own deeming — you have codes,

And mysteries, and corollaries of

Right and wrong, which I lack for my direction,

And must pursue but what a plain heart teaches.

And now you know me.

Bel.

Have you finished?

Arb.

Yes —

With you.

Bel.

And would, perhaps, betray as well
As quit me?

Arb.

That's a sacerdotal thought
And not a soldier's.

Bel.

Be it what you will —
Truce with these wranglings, and but hear me.

Arb.

No —

There is more peril in your subtle spirit
Than in a phalanx.

Bel. If it must be so —
I'll on alone.

Arb. Alone!

Bel. Thrones hold but one.

Arb. But this is filled.

Bel. With worse than vacancy --
A despised monarch. Look to it, Arbaces :
I have still aided, cherished, loved, and urged
you ;

Was willing even to serve you, in the hope
To serve and save Assyria. Heaven itself
Seemed to consent, and all events were friendly,
Even to the last, till that your spirit shrunk
Into a shallow softness ; but now, rather
Than see my country languish, I will be
Her savior or the victim of her tyrant,
Or one or both, for sometimes both are one ;
And if I win, Arbaces is my servant.

Arb. Your servant !

Bel. Why not ? better than be slave,
The *pardoned* slave of *she* Sardanapalus !

Enter PANIA.

Pan. My lords, I bear an order from the king.

Arb. It is obeyed ere spoken.

Bel. Notwithstanding,
Let's hear it.

Pan. Forthwith, on this very night,

Repair to your respective satrapies
Of Babylon and Media.

Bel. With our troops?

Pan. My order is unto the satraps and
Their household train.

Arb. But ——

Bel. It must be obeyed:

Say, we depart.

Pan. My order is to see you
Depart, and not to bear your answer.

Bel. (*aside*). Ay!

Well, sir, we will accompany you hence.

Pan. I will retire to marshal forth the guard
Of honor which befits your rank, and wait
Your leisure, so that it the hour exceeds not.

[*Exit PANIA.*

Bel. Now then obey!

Arb. Doubtless.

Bel. Yes, to the gates

That grate the palace, which is now our prison —
No further.

Arb. Thou hast harped the truth indeed!
The realm itself, in all its wide extension,
Yawns dungeons at each step for thee and me.

Bel. Graves!

Arb. If I thought so, this good sword should dig
One more than mine.

Bel. It shall have work enough.

Let me hope better than thou augurest;

At present, let us hence as best we may.

Thou dost agree with me in understanding
This order as a sentence?

Arb. Why, what other
Interpretation should it bear? it is
The very policy of orient monarchs —
Pardon and poison — favors and a sword —
A distant voyage, and an eternal sleep.
How many satraps in his father's time —
For he I own is, or at least *was*, bloodless —

Bel. But *will* not, *can* not be so now.

Arb. I doubt it.
How many satraps have I seen set out
In his sire's day for mighty vice-royalties,
Whose tombs are on their path! I know not how,
But they all sickened by the way, it was
So long and heavy.

Bel. Let us but regain
The free air of the city, and we'll shorten
The journey.

Arb. 'Twill be shortened at the gates.
It may be.

Bel. No; they hardly will risk that.
They mean us to die privately, but not
Within the palace or the city walls,
Where we are known, and may have partisans:
If they had meant to slay us here, we were
No longer with the living. Let us hence.

Arb. If I but thought he did not mean my
life ——

Bel. Fool! hence — what else should despotism
alarmed

Mean? Let us but rejoin our troops and march.

Arb. Towards our provinces?

Bel. No; towards your kingdom.
There's time, there's heart, and hope, and power
and means,
Which their half measures leave us in full scope. —
Away!

Arb. And I even yet repenting must
Relapse to guilt!

Bel. Self-defence is a virtue,
Sole bulwark of all right. Away, I say!
Let's leave this place, the air grows thick and choking,
And the walls have a scent of night-shade — hence!
Let us not leave them time for further counsel.
Our quick departure proves our civic zeal;
Our quick departure hinders our good escort,
The worthy Pania, from anticipating
The orders of some parasangs from hence:
Nay, there's no other choice, but — hence, I say.
[*Exit with ARBACES, who follows reluctantly.**]

* [Arbaces is a mere common-place warrior; and Beleses, on whom, we suspect, Lord Byron has bestowed more than usual pains, is a very ordinary and uninteresting villain. Sardanapalus, indeed, and Salemenes, are both made to speak of the wily Chaldean as the master-mover of the plot, as a politician in whose hands Arbaces is but a "warlike puppet;" and Diodorus Siculus has represented him, in fact, as the first instigator of Arbaces to his treason, and as making use of his priestly

Enter SARDANAPALUS *and* SALEMENES.

Sar. Well, all is remedied, and without bloodshed,
That worst of mockeries of a remedy ;
We are now secure by these men's exile.

character, and his supposed power of foretelling future events, to inflame the ambition, to direct the measures, to sustain the hopes, and to reprove the despondency of his comrade. But of all this nothing appears in the tragedy. Lord Byron has been so anxious to show his own contempt for the priest, that he has not even allowed him that share of cunning and evil influence which was necessary for the part which he had to fill. Instead of being the original, the restless and unceasing prompter to bold and wicked measures, we find him, on his first appearance, hanging back from the enterprise, and chilling the energy of Arbaces by an enumeration of the real or possible difficulties which might yet impede its execution. Instead of exercising that power over the mind of his comrade which a religious impostor may well possess over better and more magnanimous souls than his own, Beleses is made to pour his predictions into incredulous ears; and Arbaces is as mere an epicurean in his creed as Sardanapalus. When we might have expected to find him gazing with hope and reverence on the star which the Chaldean points out as his natal planet, the Median warrior speaks, in the language of Mezentius, of the sword on which *his* confidence depends, and instead of being a tool in the hand of the pontiff, he says almost every thing which is likely to affront him. Though Beleses is introduced to us as engaged in devotion, and as a fervent worshipper of the Sun, he is nowhere made either to feel or to counterfeit that *professional* zeal against Sardanapalus which his open contempt of the gods would naturally call for; and no reason appears, throughout the play, why Arbaces should follow, against his own conscience and opinion the counsels of a man of whom he speaks with dislike and disgust, and whose pretences to inspiration and sanctity he treats with unmingled ridicule. — HEBER.]

Sal. Yes,
As he who treads on flowers is from the adder
Twined round their roots.

Sar. Why, what wouldst have me do?

Sal. Undo what you have done.

Sar. Revoke my pardon?

Sal. Replace the crown now tottering on your
temples.

Sar. That were tyrannical.

Sal. But sure.

Sar. We are so.
What danger can they work upon the frontier?

Sal. They are not there yet — never should they
be so,

Were I well listened to.

Sar. Nay, I *have* listened
Impartially to thee — why not to them?

Sal. You may know that hereafter; as it is,
I take my leave to order forth the guard.

Sar. And you will join us at the banquet?

Sal. Sire,
Dispense with me — I am no wassailer:
Command me in all service save the Bacchant's.

Sar. Nay, but 'tis fit to revel now and then.

Sal. And fit that some should watch for those
who revel

Too oft. Am I permitted to depart?

Sar. Yes — Stay a moment, my good Sale-
menes,

My brother, my best subject, better prince

Than I am king. You should have been the monarch,
And I—I know not what, and care not; but
Think not I am insensible to all
Thine honest wisdom, and thy rough yet kind,
Though oft reproving, sufferance of my follies.
If I have spared these men against thy counsel,
That is, their lives—it is not that I doubt
The advice was sound; but, let them live: we will not
Cavil about their lives—so let them mend them.
Their banishment will leave me still sound sleep,
Which their death had not left me.

Sal. Thus you run
The risk to sleep for ever, to save traitors—
A moment's pang now changed for years of crime.
Still let them be made quiet.

Sar. Tempt me not:
My word is past.

Sal. But it may be recalled.

Sar. 'Tis royal.

Sal. And should therefore be decisive.
This half indulgence of an exile serves
But to provoke—a pardon should be full,
Or it is none.

Sar. And who persuaded me
After I had repealed them, or at least
Only dismissed them from our presence, who
Urged me to send them to their satrapies?

Sal. True; that I had forgotten; that is, sire,
If they e'er reached their satrapies—why, then,
Reprove me more for my advice.

Sar. And if
They do not reach them — look to it! — in safety,
In safety, mark me — and security —
Look to thine own.

Sal. Permit me to depart;
Their *safety* shall be cared for.

Sar. Get thee hence, then;
And, prithee, think more gently of thy brother.

Sal. Sire, I shall ever duly serve my sovereign.
[*Exit* SALEMENES.]

Sar. (solus). That man is of a temper too severe;
Hard but as lofty as the rock, and free
From all the taints of common earth — while I
Am softer clay, impregnated with flowers:
But as our mould is, must the produce be.
If I have erred this time, 'tis on the side
Where error sits most lightly on that sense,
I know not what to call it; but it reckons
With me ofttimes for pain, and sometimes pleasure;
A spirit which seems placed about my heart
To count its throbs, not quicken them, and ask
Questions which mortal never dared to ask me,
Nor Baal, though an oracular deity — *
Albeit his marble face majestic
Frowns as the shadows of the evening dim
His brows to changed expression, till at times
I think the statue looks in act to speak.

* [MS. — “Nor silent Baal, our imaged deity,
Although his marble face looks frowningly
As the dull shadows,” etc.]

Away with these vain thoughts, I will be joyous —
And here comes Joy's true herald.

Enter MYRRHA.

Myr. King! the sky
Is overcast, and musters muttering thunder,
In clouds that seem approaching fast, and show
In forked flashes a commanding tempest.*
Will you then quit the palace?

Sar. Tempest, say'st thou?

Myr. Ay, my good lord.

Sar. For my own part, I should be
Not ill content to vary the smooth scene,
And watch the warring elements; but this
Would little suit the silken garments and
Smooth faces of our festive friends. Say, Myrrha,
Art thou of those who dread the roar of clouds?

Myr. In my own country we respect their voices
As auguries of Jove.†

Sar. Jove! — ay, your Baal —
Ours also has a property in thunder,
And ever and anon some falling bolt
Proves his divinity, — and yet sometimes
Strikes his own altars.

Myr. That were a dread omen.

Sar Yes — for the priests. Well, we will not
go forth

* [MS. — "In distant flashes { a wide-spreading }
the approaching } tempest."]

† [MS. — "As from the gods to augur."]

Beyond the palace walls to-night, but make
Our feast within.

Myr. Now, Jove be praised! that he
Hath heard the prayer thou wouldst not hear. The
Are kinder to thee than thou to thyself, [gods
And flash this storm between thee and thy foes,
To shield thee from them.

Sar. Child, if there be peril,
Methinks it is the same within these walls
As on the river's brink.

Myr. Not so; these walls
Are high and strong, and guarded. Treason has
To penetrate through many a winding way,
And massy portal; but in the pavilion
There is no bulwark.

Sar. No, nor in the palace,
Nor in the fortress, nor upon the top
Of cloud-fenced Caucasus, where the eagle sits
Nested in pathless clefts, if treachery be:
Even as the arrow finds the airy king,
The steel will reach the earthly. But be calm:
The men, or innocent or guilty, are
Banished, and far upon their way.

Myr. They live, then?

Sar. So sanguinary? *Thou!*

Myr. I would not shrink
From just infliction of due punishment
On those who seek your life: wer't otherwise,
I should not merit mine. Besides, you heard
The princely Salemenes.

Sar. This is strange ;
The gentle and the austere are both against me,
And urge me to revenge.

Myr. 'T is a Greek virtue.

Sar. But not a kingly one — I'll none on 't ; or
If ever I indulge in 't, it shall be
With kings — my equals.

Myr. These men sought to be so.

Sar. Myrrha, this is too feminine, and springs
From fear ——

Myr. For you.

Sar. No matter, still 't is fear.
I have observed your sex, once roused to wrath,
Are timidly vindictive to a pitch
Of perseverance, which I would not copy.
I thought you were exempt from this, as from
The childish helplessness of Asian women.*

Myr. My lord, I am no boaster of my love,
Nor of my attributes ; I have shared your splendor
And will partake your fortunes. You may live
To find one slave more true than subject myriads :
But this the gods avert ! I am content
To be beloved on trust for what I feel,
Rather than prove it to you in your griefs,†
Which might not yield to any cares of mine.

Sar. Grief cannot come where perfect love exists,
Except to heighten it, and vanish from
That which it could not scare away. Let's in —

* [MS. — “ The weaker merit of our Asian women.”]

† [MS. — “ Rather than prove that love to you in griefs.”]

The hour approaches, and we must prepare
To meet the invited guests who grace our feast.

[*Exeunt.* *]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

*The Hall of the Palace illuminated—SARDANAPALUS
and his Guests at Table.—A Storm without, and
Thunder occasionally heard during the Banquet.*

Sar. Fill full! why this is as it should be: here
Is my true realm, amidst bright eyes and faces
Happy as fair! Here sorrow cannot reach.

Zam. Nor elsewhere — where the king is, pleas-
ure sparkles.

Sar. Is not this better now than Nimrod's hunt-
ings,
Or my wild grandam's chase in search of kingdoms
She could not keep when conquered?

Alt. Mighty though
They were, as all thy royal line have been,
Yet none of those who went before have reached
The acmé of Sardanapalus, who
Has placed his joy in peace — the sole true glory.

* [The second Act, which contains the details of the conspiracy of Arbaces, its detection by the vigilance of Salemenes, and the too rash and hasty forgiveness of the rebels by the king, is, on the whole, heavy and uninteresting. — JEFFREY.]

Sar. And pleasure, good Altada, to which glory
Is but the path. What is it that we seek?
Enjoyment! We have cut the way short to it,
And not gone tracking it through human ashes,
Making a grave with every footstep.

Zam.

No;

All hearts are happy, and all voices bless
The king of peace, who holds a world in jubilee.

Sar. Art sure of that? I have heard otherwise;
Some say that there be traitors.

Zam.

Traitors they

Who dare to say so! — 'T is impossible.
What cause?

Sar. What cause? true, — fill the goblet up;
We will not think of them: there are none such,
Or if there be, they are gone.

Alt.

Guests, to my pledge!

Down on your knees, and drink a measure to
The safety of the king — the monarch, say I?
The god Sardanapalus!

[*ZAMES and the Guests kneel and exclaim —*
Mightier than

His father Baal, the god Sardanapalus!

[*It thunders as they kneel; some start up in*
confusion.

Zam. Why do you rise, my friends? in that strong
peal
His father gods consented.

Myr.

Menaced, rather.

King, wilt thou bear this mad impiety?

Sar. Impiety! — nay, if the sires who reigned
Before me can be gods, I'll not disgrace
Their lineage. But arise, my pious friends;
Hoard your devotion for the thunderer there
I seek but to be loved, not worshipped.

Alt.

Both —

Both you must ever be by all true subjects.

Sar. Methinks the thunders still increase: it is
An awful night.

Myr. Oh yes, for those who have
No palace to protect their worshippers.

Sar. That's true, my Myrrha; and could I convert
My realm to one wide shelter for the wretched,
I'd do it.

Myr. Thou'rt no god, then, not to be
Able to work a will so good and general,
As thy wish would imply.

Sar. And your gods, then,
Who can, and do not?

Myr. Do not speak of that,
Lest we provoke them.

Sar. True, they love not censure
Better than mortals. Friends, a thought has
struck me:

Were there no temples, would there, think ye, be
Air worshippers? that is, when it is angry,
And pelting as even now.

Myr. The Persian prays
Upon his mountain.

Sar. Yes, when the sun shines.

Myr. And I would ask if this your palace were
Unroofed and desolate, how many flatterers
Would lick the dust in which the king lay low?

Alt. The fair Ionian is too sarcastic
Upon a nation whom she knows not well;
The Assyrians know no pleasure but their king's,
And homage is their pride.

Sar. Nay, pardon, guests,
The fair Greek's readiness of speech.

Alt. Pardon! sire:
We honor her of all things next to thee.
Hark! what was that?

Zam. That! nothing but the jar
Of distant portals shaken by the wind.

Alt. It sounded like the clash of—hark again!

Zam. The big rain pattering on the roof.

Sar. No more.
Myrrha, my love, hast thou thy shell in order?
Sing me a song of Sappho, her, thou know'st,
Who in thy country threw——

*Enter PANIA, with his sword and garments bloody,
and disordered. The Guests rise in confusion.**

Pan. (to the Guards). Look to the portals:
And with your best speed to the walls without.

* [Early in the third Act, the royal banquet is disturbed by sudden tidings of treason and revolt; and then the reveller blazes out into the hero, and the Greek blood of Myrrha mounts to its proper office! — JEFFREY.]

Your arms! To arms! The king's in danger. Mon-
arch!

Excuse this haste, — 't is faith.

Sar.

Speak on.

Pan.

It is

As Salemenes feared; the faithless satraps —

Sar. You are wounded — give some wine. Take
breath, good Pania.

Pan. 'T is nothing — a mere flesh wound. I am
worn

More with my speed to warn my sovereign,
Than hurt in his defence.

Myr.

Well, sir, the rebels?

Pan. Soon as Arbaces and Beleses reached
Their stations in the city, they refused
To march; and on my attempt to use the power
Which I was delegated with, they called
Upon their troops, who rose in fierce defiance.

Myr. All?

Pan.

Too many.

Sar.

Spare not of thy free speech,
To spare mine ears the truth.

Pan.

My own slight guard
Were faithful, and what's left of it is still so.

Myr. And are these all the force still faithful?

Pan.

No —

The Bactrians, now led on by Salemenes,
Who even then was on his way, still urged
By strong suspicion of the Median chiefs,

Are numerous, and make strong head against
The rebels, fighting inch by inch, and forming
An orb around the palace, where they mean
To centre all their force, and save the king.

(*He hesitates.*) I am charged to ——

Myr. 'Tis no time for hesitation.

Pan. Prince Salemenes doth implore the king
To arm himself, although but for a moment,
And show himself unto the soldiers: his
Sole presence in this instant might do more
Than hosts can do in his behalf.

Sar. What, ho!

My armor there.

Myr. And wilt thou?

Sar. Will I not?

Ho, there! — but seek not for the buckler: 'tis
Too heavy: — a light cuirass and my sword.
Where are the rebels?

Pan. Scarce a furlong's length
From the outward wall the fiercest conflict rages.

Sar. Then I may charge on horseback. Sfero, ho!
Order my horse out. — There is space enough
Even in our courts, and by the outer gate,
To marshal half the horsemen of Arabia.

[*Exit Sfero for the armor.*]

Myr. How I do love thee!

Sar. I ne'er doubted it.

Myr. But now I know thee.

Sar. (*to his Attendant*). Bring down my spear
too. —

Where's Salemenes?

Pan. Where a soldier should be,
In the thick of the fight.

Sar. Then hasten to him — Is
The path still open, and communication
Left 'twixt the palace and the phalanx?

Pan. 'T was
When I late left him, and I have no fear:
Our troops were steady, and the phalanx formed.

Sar. Tell him to spare his person for the present,
And that I will not spare my own — and say,
I come.

Pan. There's victory in the very word.

[*Exit PANIA.*

Sar. Altada — Zames — forth, and arm ye! There
Is all in readiness in the armory.
See that the women are bestowed in safety
In the remote apartments: let a guard
Be set before them, with strict charge to quit
The post but with their lives — command it, Zames.
Altada, arm yourself, and return here;
Your post is near our person.

[*Exeunt ZAMES, ALTADA, and all save MYRRHA.*

Enter SFERO and others with the King's Arms, etc.

Sfe. King! your armor.

Sar. (*arming himself*). Give me the cuirass — so:
my baldric; now

My sword: I had forgot the helm — where is it?
That's well — no, 'tis too heavy: you mistake, too —
It was not this I meant, but that which bears
A diadem around it.

Sfe. Sire, I deemed
That too conspicuous from the precious stones
To risk your sacred brow beneath — and trust me,
This is of better metal, though less rich.

Sar. You deemed! Are you too turned a rebel?
Fellow!

Your part is to obey: return, and — no —
It is too late — I will go forth without it.

Sfe. At least, wear this.

Sar. Wear Caucasus! why, 'tis
A mountain on my temples.

Sfe. Sire, the meanest
Soldier goes not forth thus exposed to battle.
All men will recognize you — for the storm [ness.
Has ceased, and the moon breaks forth in her bright-

Sar. I go forth to be recognized, and thus
Shall be so sooner. Now — my spear! I'm armed.
[*In going stops short, and turns to Sfero.*
Sfero — I had forgotten — bring the mirror.*

Sfe. The mirror, sire?

Sar. Yes, sir, of polished brass,
Brought from the spoils of India — but be speedy.†
[*Exit Sfero.*

* [“In the third Act, where Sardanapalus calls for a mirror to look at himself in his armor, recollect to quote the Latin passage from Juvenal upon Otho (a similar character, who did the same thing). Gifford will help you to it. The trait is, perhaps, too familiar, but it is historical (of Otho, at least), and natural in an effeminate character.” — *Byron to Mr. M.*]

† [“Ille tenet speculum pathici gestamen Othonis,
Actoris Arunci spolium, quo se ille videbat

Sar. Myrrha, retire unto a place of safety.
Why went you not forth with the other damsels?

Myr. Because my place is here.

Sar. And when I am gone ——

Myr. I follow.

Sar. *You!* to battle?

Myr. If it were so,
'Twere not the first Greek girl had trod the path.
I will await here your *return*.

Sar. The place
Is spacious, and the first to be sought out,
If they prevail; and, if it be so,
And I return not ——

Myr. Still we meet again.

Sar. How?

Myr. In the spot where all must meet at last —
In Hades! if there be, as I believe,
A shore beyond the Styx: and if there be not,
In ashes.

Sar. Darest thou so much?

Myr. I dare all things
Except survive what I have loved, to be

Armatum, cum jam tolli vexilla juberet.
Res memoranda novis annalibus, atque recent:
Historia, speculum civilis farcina belli." — *JUV. Sat. ii.*

"This grasps a mirror — pathic Otho's boast
(Auruncan Actor's spoil), where, while his host,
With shouts, the signal of the fight required,
He viewed his mailed form; viewed, and admired!
Lo, a new subject for the historic page,
A MIRROR, midst the arms of civil rage!" — *GIFFORD.*]

A rebel's booty: forth, and do your bravest.

Re-enter SFERO with the mirror.

Sar. (looking at himself). This cuirass fits me well,
the baldric better,

And the helm not at all. Methinks I seem

[Flings away the helmet after trying it again.]

Passing well in these toys; and now to prove them.
Altada! Where's Altada?

Sfe.

Waiting, sire,

Without: he has your shield in readiness.

Sar. True; I forgot he is my shield-bearer

By right of blood, derived from age to age.

Myrrha, embrace me; — yet once more — once
more —

Love me, whate'er betide. My chiefest glory

Shall be to make me worthier of your love.

Myr. Go forth, and conquer!

[Exeunt SARDANAPALUS and SFERO.]*

Now, I am alone.

All are gone forth, and of that all how few
Perhaps return. Let him but vanquish, and
Me perish! If he vanquish not, I perish;
For I will not outlive him. He has wound
About my heart, I know not how nor why.

* [In the third Act, the king and his courtiers are disturbed at their banquet by the breaking out of the conspiracy. The battle which follows, if we overlook the absurdity, which occurs during one part of it, of hostile armies drawn up against each other in a dining-room, is extremely well told; and Sardanapalus displays the precise mixture of effeminacy and courage, levity and talent, which belongs to his character. -- HEBER.]

Not for that he is king ; for now his kingdom
Rocks underneath his throne, and the earth yawns
To yield him no more of it than a grave ;
And yet I love him more. Oh, mighty Jove !
Forgive this monstrous love for a barbarian,
Who knows not of Olympus ! yes, I love him
Now, now, far more than — Hark — to the war
shout !

Methinks it nears me. If it should be so,

[She draws forth a small vial.]

This cunning Colchian poison, which my father [me
Learned to compound on Euxine shores, and taught
How to preserve, shall free me ! It had freed me
Long ere this hour, but that I loved, until
I half forgot I was a slave : — where all
Are slaves save one, and proud of servitude,
So they are served in turn by something lower
In the degree of bondage, we forget
That shackles worn like ornaments no less
Are chains. Again that shout ! and now the clash
Of arms — and now — and now —

Enter ALTADA.

Alt. Ho, Sfero, ho !

Myr. He is not here ; what wouldst thou with
him ? How
Goes on the conflict ?

Alt. Dubiously and fiercely.

Myr. And the king ?

Alt. Like a king. I must find Sfero,

And bring him a new spear and his own helmet.
He fights till now bare-headed, and by far
'Too much exposed. The soldiers knew his face,
And the foe too; and in the moon's broad light,
His silk tiara and his flowing hair
Make him a mark too royal. Every arrow
Is pointed at the fair hair and fair features,
And the broad fillet which crowns both.

Myr. Ye gods,
Who fulminate o'er my father's land, protect him!
Were you sent by the king?

Alt. By Salemenes,
Who sent me privily upon this charge,
Without the knowledge of the careless sovereign.
The king! the king fights as he revels! ho!
What, Sfero! I will seek the armory —
He must be there. [*Exit ALTADA.*

Myr. 'Tis no dishonor — no —
'Tis no dishonor to have loved this man.
I almost wish now, what I never wished
Before, that he were Grecian. If Alcides
Were shamed in wearing Lydian Omphale's
She-garb, and wielding her vile distaff; surely
He, who springs up a Hercules at once,
Nursed in effeminate arts from youth to manhood,
And rushes from the banquet to the battle,
As though it were a bed of love, deserves
That a Greek girl should be his paramour,
And a Greek bard his minstrel, a Greek tomb
His monument. How goes the strife, sir?

Enter an Officer.

Officer. Lost, Lost almost past recovery. Zames! Where Is Zames?

Myr. Posted with the guard appointed To watch before the apartment of the women.

[Exit Officer.]

Myr. (sola). He's gone; and told no more than that all's lost! What need have I to know more? In those words, Those little words, a kingdom and a king, A line of thirteen ages, and the lives Of thousands, and the fortune of all left With life, are merged; and I, too, with the great, Like a small bubble breaking with the wave Which bore it, shall be nothing. At the least, My fate is in my keeping: no proud victor Shall count me with his spoils.

Enter PANIA.

Pan. Away with me, Myrrha, without delay; we must not lose A moment — all that's left us now.

Myr. The king?

Pan. Sent me here to conduct you hence, beyond The river, by a secret passage.

Myr. Then He lives —

Pan. And charged me to secure your life,

And beg you to live on for his sake, till
He can rejoin you.

Myr. Will he then give way?

Pan. Not till the last. Still, still he does whate'er
Despair can do ; and step by step disputes
The very palace.

Myr. They are here, then : — ay,
Their shouts come ringing through the ancient halls,
Never profaned by rebel echoes till
This fatal night. Farewell, Assyria's line !
Farewell to all of Nimrod ! Even the name
Is now no more.

Pan. Away with me — away !

Myr. No : I'll die here ! — Away, and tell your
king
I loved him to the last.

Enter SARDANAPALUS and SALEMENES with Soldiers. PANIA quits MYRRHA, and ranges himself with them.

Sar. Since it is thus,
We'll die where we were born — in our own halls.
Serry your ranks — stand firm. I have despatched
A trusty satrap for the guard of Zames,
All fresh and faithful ; they'll be here anon.
All is not over. — Pania, look to Myrrha.

[PANIA returns towards MYRRHA.

Sal. We have breathing time ; yet once more
charge, my friends —
One for Assyria !

Sar. Rather say for Bactria!
My faithful Bactrians, I will henceforth be
King of your nation, and we'll hold together
This realm as province.

Sal. Hark! they come — they come.

Enter BELESES and ARBACES with the Rebels.

Arb. Set on, we have them in the toil. Charge!
charge!

Bel. On! on! — Heaven fights for us and with
us — On!

[*They charge the King and SALEMENES with their
Troops, who defend themselves till the Arrival
of ZAMES, with the Guard before mentioned.
The Rebels are then driven off, and pursued
by SALEMENES, etc. As the king is going to
join the pursuit, BELESES crosses him.*

Bel. Ho! tyrant — *I* will end this war.

Sar. Even so,
My warlike priest, and precious prophet, and
Grateful and trusty subject: — yield, I pray thee.
I would reserve thee for a fitter doom,
Rather than dip my hands in holy blood.

Bel. Thine hour is come.

Sar. No, thine. — I've lately read,
Though but a young astrologer, the stars;
And ranging round the zodiac, found thy fate
In the sign of the Scorpion, which proclaims
That thou wilt now be crushed.

Bel. But not by thee.

[*They fight; BELESES is wounded and disarmed.*

Sar. (*raising his sword to dispatch him, exclaims*) —

Now call upon thy planets, will they shoot
From the sky to preserve their seer and credit?

[*A party of Rebels enter and rescue BELESES.*
They assail the King, who, in turn, is rescued
by a Party of his Soldiers, who drive the
Rebels off.

The villain was a prophet after all.

Upon them — ho ! there — victory is ours.

[*Exit in pursuit.*

Myr. (*to Pan.*) Pursue ! Why stand'st thou here,
and leavest the ranks

Of fellow soldiers conquering without thee ?

Pan. The king's command was not to quit thee.

Myr. *Me !*

Think not of me — a single soldier's arm
Must not be wanting now. I ask no guard,
I need no guard : what, with a world at stake,
Keep watch upon a woman ? Hence, I say,
Or thou art shamed ! Nay, then, *I* will go forth,
A feeble female, 'midst their desperate strife,
And bid thee guard me *there* — where thou shouldst
shield

Thy sovereign. [Exit MYRRHA.

Pan. Yet stay, damsel ! She is gone.
If aught of ill betide her, better I
Had lost my life. Sardanapalus holds her

Far dearer than his kingdom, yet he fights
For that too ; and can I do less than he,
Who never flashed a scimitar till now ?
Myrrha, return, and I obey you, though
In disobedience to the monarch. [*Exit PANIA.*

Enter ALTADA and SFERO by an opposite door.

Alt. Myrrha !

What, gone ? yet she was here when the fight
ragged

And Pania also. Can aught have befallen them ?

Sfe. I saw both safe, when late the rebels fled :
They probably are but retired to make
Their way back to the harem.

Alt. If the king
Prove victor, as it seems even now he must,
And miss his own Ionian, we are doomed
To worse than captive rebels.

Sfe. Let us trace them ;
She cannot be fled far ; and, found, she makes
A richer prize to our soft sovereign
Than his recovered kingdom.

Alt. Baal himself
Ne'er fought more fiercely to win empire, than
His silken son to save it : he defies
All augury of foes or friends ; and like
The close and sultry summer's day, which bodes
A twilight tempest, bursts forth in such thunder
As sweeps the air and deluges the earth.
The man's inscrutable.

Sfe. Not more than others.
All are the sons of circumstance: away —
Let's seek the slave out, or prepare to be
Tortured for his infatuation, and
Condemned without a crime. [*Exeunt.*

Enter SALEMENES and Soldiers, etc.

Sal. The triumph is
Flattering: they are beaten backward from the palace,
And we have opened regular access
To the troops stationed on the other side
Euphrates, who may still be true; nay, must be,
When they hear of our victory. But where
Is the chief victor? where's the king.

Enter SARDANAPALUS, cum suis, etc. and MYRRHA.

Sar. Here, brother.*

Sal. Unhurt, I hope.

Sar. Not quite; but let it pass.
We've cleared the palace —

Sal. And I trust the city.
Our numbers gather: and I've ordered onward
A cloud of Parthians, hitherto reserved,
All fresh and fiery, to be poured upon them
In their retreat, which soon will be a flight.

Sar. It is already, or at least they marched
Faster than I could follow with my Bactrians,
Who spared no speed. I am spent: give me a seat.

* [The king, by his daring valor, restores the fortune of the fight, and returns, with all his train, to the palace. The scene that ensues is very masterly and characteristic. — JEFFREY.]

Sal. There stands the throne, sire.

Sar. 'Tis no place to rest on,
For mind nor body: let me have a couch,
[*They place a seat.*

A peasant's stool, I care not what: so — now
I breathe more freely.

Sal. This great hour has proved
The brightest and most glorious of your life.

Sar. And the most tiresome. Where's my cup-
bearer?

Bring me some water.

Sal. (smiling). 'Tis the first time he
Ever had such an order: even I,
Your most austere of counsellors, would now
Suggest a purpler beverage.

Sar. Blood — doubtless.
But there's enough of that shed; as for wine,
I have learned to-night the price of the pure
element:

Thrice have I drank of it, and thrice renewed,
With greater strength than the grape ever gave me,
My charge upon the rebels. Where's the soldier
Who gave me water in his helmet?

One of the Guards. Slain, sire!
An arrow pierced his brain, while, scattering
The last drops from his helm, he stood in act
To place it on his brows.

Sar. Slain! unrewarded!
And slain to serve my thirst: that's hard, poor slave.
Had he but lived, I would have gorged him with
Gold: all the gold of earth could ne'er repay

The pleasure of that draught; for I was parched
As I am now. [*They bring water — he drinks.*

I live again — from henceforth
The goblet I reserve for hours of love,
But war on water.

Sal. And that bandage, sire,
Which girds your arm?

Sar. A scratch from brave Beleses.

Myr. Oh! he is wounded!

Sar. Not too much of that;
And yet it feels a little stiff and painful,
Now I am cooler.

Myr. You have bound it with ——

Sar. The fillet of my diadem: the first time
That ornament was ever aught to me,
Save an incumbrance.

Myr. (*to the attendants*). Summon speedily
A leech of the most skilful: pray, retire:
I will unbind your wound and tend it.

Sar. Do so,
For now it throbs sufficiently: but what
Know'st thou of wounds? yet wherefore do I ask?
Know'st thou, my brother, where I lighted on
This minion?

Sal. Herding with the other females,
Like frightened antelopes.

Sar. No: like the dam
Of the young lion, femininely raging,
(And femininely meaneth furiously,
Because all passions in excess are female,)

Against the hunter flying with her cub,
She urged on with her voice and gesture, and
Her floating hair and flashing eyes, the soldiers,
In the pursuit.

Sal. Indeed!

Sar. You see, this night
Made warriors of more than me. I paused
To look upon her, and her kindled cheek ;
Her large black eyes, that flashed through her long
hair

As it streamed o'er her ; her blue veins that rose
Along her most transparent brow ; her nostril
Dilated from its symmetry ; her lips
Apart ; her voice that clove through all the din,
As a lute's pierceth through the cymbal's clash,
Jarred but not drowned by the loud brattling ; her
Waved arms, more dazzling with their own born
whiteness

Than the steel her hand held, which she caught up
From a dead soldier's grasp; — all these things made
Her seem unto the troops a prophetess
Of victory, or Victory herself,
Come down to hail us hers.

Sal. (aside). This is too much.

Again the love fit's on him, and all's lost,
Unless we turn his thoughts.

(*Aloud*). But pray thee, sire,
Think of your wound—you said even now 't was
painful.

Sar. That's true, too; but I must not think of it.

Sal. I have looked to all things needful, and will
now

Receive reports of progress made in such
Orders as I had given, and then return
To hear your further pleasure.

Sar. Be it so.

Sal. (*in retiring*). Myrrha!

Myr. Prince!

Sal. You have shown a soul to-night,
Which, were he not my sister's lord —— But now
I have no time: thou lovest the king?

Myr. I love
Sardanapalus.

Sal. But wouldst have him king still?

Myr. I would not have him less than what he
should be.

Sal. Well then, to have him king, and yours,
and all

He should, or should not be; to have him *live*,
Let him not sink back into luxury.

You have more power upon his spirit than
Wisdom within these walls, or fierce rebellion
Raging without: look well that he relapse not.

Myr. There needed not the voice of Salemenes
To urge me on to this: I will not fail.
All that a woman's weakness can ——

Sal. Is power
Omnipotent o'er such a heart as his:
Exert it wisely. [*Exit SALEMENES.*

Sar. Myrrha! what, at whispers
With my stern brother? I shall soon be jealous.*

Myr. (smiling). You have cause, sire; for on the
earth there breathes not

A man more worthy of a woman's love —

A soldier's trust — a subject's reverence —

A king's esteem — the whole world's admiration!†

Sar. Praise him, but not so warmly. I must not
Hear those sweet lips grow eloquent in aught
That throws me into shade; yet you speak truth.

Myr. And now retire, to have your wound
looked to.

Pray, lean on me.

Sar. Yes, love! but not from pain.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

* [The rebels are at length repulsed. The king reënters wounded, and retires to rest, after a short and very characteristic conversation between Salemenes and Myrrha, in which the two kindred spirits show their mutual understanding of each other, and the loyal warrior, postponing all the selfish domestic feelings which led him to dislike the fair Ionian, exhorts her to use her utmost power to keep her lover from relaxing into luxury. The transient effect which their whispers produce on Sardanapalus is well imagined. — HEBER.]

† [MS. — "A king's esteem — the whole world's { admiration
veneration
reverence.' }]

A C T I V.

SCENE I.

SARDANAPALUS *discovered sleeping upon a Couch, and occasionally disturbed in his Slumbers, with MYRRHA watching.*

Myr. (sola; gazing). I have stolen upon his rest,
if rest it be,

Which thus convulses slumber: shall I wake him?
No, he seems calmer. Oh, thou God of Quiet!
Whose reign is o'er sealed eyelids and soft dreams,
Or deep, deep sleep, so as to be unfathomed,
Look like thy brother, Death,—so still—so stir-
less —

For then we are happiest, as it may be, we
Are happiest of all within the realm
Of thy stern, silent, and unwakening twin.
Again he moves — again the play of pain
Shoots o'er his features, as the sudden gust
Crisps the reluctant lake that lay so calm *
Beneath the mountain shadow; or the blast
Ruffles the autumn leaves, that drooping cling
Faintly and motionless to their loved boughs.
I must awake him — yet not yet: who knows
From what I rouse him? It seems pain; but if
I quicken him to heavier pain? The fever
Of this tumultuous night, the grief too of

* [MS. — “Crisps the unswelling wave,” etc.]

His wound, though slight, may cause ail this, and
shake

Me more to see than him to suffer. No:
Let Nature use her own maternal means, —
And I await to second, not disturb her.*

Sar. (awakening). Not so — although ye multiplied the stars,
And gave them to me as a realm to share
From you and with you! I would not so purchase
The empire of eternity. Hence — hence —
Old hunter of the earliest brutes! and ye,
Who hunted fellow-creatures as if brutes!
Once bloody mortals — and now bloodier idols,
If your priests lie not! And thou, ghastly beldame!
Dripping with dusky gore, and trampling on
The carcasses of Inde — away! away!
Where am I? Where the spectres? Where —
No — that
Is no false phantom: I should know it 'midst
All that the dead dare gloomily raise up
From their black gulf to daunt the living. Myrrha!
Myr. Alas! thou art pale, and on thy brow the
drops
Gather like night dew. My beloved, hush —

* [The fourth Act opens with Myrrha watching over the slumbers of Sardanapalus. He wakens and tells a horrid dream, which we do not much admire, except that part of it which describes the form of his warlike ancestress Semiramis, with whom, and the rest of his regal predecessors, he had fancied himself at a ghostly banquet. — HEBER.]

Calm thee. Thy speech seems of another world,
And thou art lord of this. Be of good cheer;
All will go well.

Sar. Thy *hand* — so — 't is thy hand;
'T is flesh; grasp — clasp — yet closer, till I feel
Myself that which I was.

Myr. At least know me
For what I am, and ever must be — thine.

Sar. I know it now. I know this life again.
Ah, Myrrha! I have been where we shall be.

Myr. My lord!

Sar. I've been i' the grave — where worms are
lords,
And kings are — But I did not deem it so;
I thought 't was nothing.

Myr. So it is; except
Unto the timid, who anticipate
That which may never be.*

* [The general tone of Myrrha's character (in perfect consistency with the manners of her age and nation, and with her own elevated but pure and feminine spirit,) is that of a devout worshipper of her country's gods. She reproves, with dignity, the impious flattery of the Assyrian courtiers and the libertine scoffs of the king. She does not forget, while preparing for death, that libation which was the latest and most solemn act of Grecian piety; and she, more particularly, expresses her belief in a future state of existence. Yet this very Myrrha, when Sardanapalus is agitated by his evil dream, and by the natural doubt as to what worse visions death may bring, is made to console him, in the strain of his own Epicurean philosophy, with the doctrine that death is really nothing, except

“Unto the timid who anticipate
That which may never be,”

Sar. Oh, Myrrha! if
Sleep shows such things, what may not death disclose?

Myr. I know no evil death can show, which life
Has not already shown to those who live
Embodied longest. If there be indeed
A shore where mind survives, 't will be as mind,

and with the insinuation that all which remains of "the dead is the dust we tread upon." We do not wish to ask, we do not like to conjecture, *whose* sentiments these are, but they are certainly not the sentiments of an ancient Grecian heroine. They are not the sentiments which Myrrha might have learned from the heroes of her native land, or from the poems whence those heroes derived their heroism, their contempt of death, "and their love of virtue." Myrrha would rather have told her lover of those happy islands where the benevolent and the brave reposed after the toils of their mortal existence; of that venerable society of departed warriors and sages to which, if he renounced his sloth and lived for his people and for glory, he might yet expect admission. She would have told him of that joy with which his warlike ancestors would move along their meads of asphodel, when the news reached them of their descendant's prowess; she would have anticipated those songs which denied that "Harmodius was dead," however he might be removed from the sphere of mortality; which told her countrymen of the "roses and the golden-fruited bowers, where beneath the light of a lower sun, departed warriors reined their shadowy cars, or struck their harps amid altars steaming with frankincense." * Such were the doctrines which naturally led men to a contempt for life and a thirst for glory: but the opposite opinions were the doubts of a later day, and of those sophists under whose influence Greece soon ceased to be free, or valiant, or virtuous." HEBER.]

* Hom. Odyss. λ. 539. Callistratus ap. Athenæum, l. xv. Pindar. Fragm. Heyne, vol. iii. p. 31.

All unincorporate : or if there flits
A shadow of this cumbrous clog of clay, [heaven,
Which stalks, methinks, between our souls and
And fetters us to earth — at least the phantom,
Whate'er it have to fear, will not fear death.

Sar. I fear it not ; but I have felt — have seen —
A legion of the dead.

Myr. And so have I.
The dust we tread upon was once alive,
And wretched. But proceed : what hast thou seen?
Speak it, 't will lighten thy dimmed mind.

Sar. Methought —

Myr. Yet pause, thou art tired — in pain — ex-
hausted ; all
Which can impair both strength and spirit : seek
Rather to sleep again.

Sar. Not now — I would not
Dream ; though I know it now to be a dream
What I have dreamt : — and canst thou bear to
hear it?

Myr. I can bear all things, dreams of life or death,
Which I participate with you in semblance
Or full reality.

Sar. And this looked real,
I tell you : after that these eyes were open,
I saw them in their flight — for then they fled.

Myr. Say on.

Sar. I saw, that is, I dreamed myself
Here — here — even where we are, guests as we
were,

Myself a host that deemed himself but guest,
Willing to equal all in social freedom ;
But, on my right hand and my left, instead
Of thee and Zames, and our custom'd meeting,
Was ranged on my left hand a haughty, dark,
And deadly face — I could not recognize it,
Yet I had seen it, though I knew not where :
The features were a giant's, and the eye
Was still, yet lighted ; his long locks curled down
On his vast bust, whence a huge quiver rose
With shaft-heads feathered from the eagle's wing,*
That peeped up bristling through his serpent hair.
I invited him to fill the cup which stood
Between us, but he answered not — I filled it —
He took it not, but stared upon me, till
I trembled at the fixed glare of his eye :
I frowned upon him as a king should frown —
He frowned not in his turn, but looked upon me
With the same aspect, which appalled me more,
Because it changed not ; and I turned for refuge
To milder guests, and sought them on the right,
Where thou wert wont to be. But —

[*He pauses.*

Myr.

What instead ?

Sar. In thy own chair — thy own place in the
banquet —

I sought thy sweet face in the circle — but
Instead — a gray-haired, withered, bloody-eyed,
And bloody-handed, ghastly, ghostly thing,

* [MS. — “ With arrows peeping through his falling hair.”]

Female in garb, and crowned upon the brow,
Furrowed with years, yet sneering with the passion
Of vengeance, leering too with that of lust,
Sate: — my veins curdled.

Myr.

Is this all?

Sar.

Upon

Her right hand — her lank, bird-like right hand —
stood

A goblet, bubbling o'er with blood; and on
Her left, another, filled with — what I saw not,
But turned from it and her. But all along
The table sate a range of crowned wretches,
Of various aspects, but of one expression.

Myr. And felt you not this a mere vision?

Sar.

No:

It was so palpable, I could have touched them.
I turned from one face to another, in
The hope to find at last one which I knew
Ere I saw theirs: but no — all turned upon me,
And stared, but neither ate nor drank, but stared,
Till I grew stone, as they seemed half to be,
Yet breathing stone, for I felt life in them,
And life in me: there was a horrid kind
Of sympathy between us, as if they
Had lost a part of death to come to me,
And I the half of life to sit by them.
We were in an existence all apart
From heaven or earth — And rather let me see
Death all than such a being!

Myr.

And the end?

Sar. At last I sate, marble, as they, when rose
The hunter and the crone ; and smiling on me —
Yes, the enlarged but noble aspect of
The hunter smiled upon me — I should say,
His lips, for his eyes moved not — and the woman's
Thin lips relaxed to something like a smile.
Both rose, and the crowned figures on each hand
Rose also, as if aping their chief shades —
Mere mimics even in death — but I sate still :
A desperate courage crept through every limb,
And at the last I feared them not, but laughed
Full in their phantom faces. But then — then
The hunter laid his hand on mine : I took it,
And grasped it — but it melted from my own ;
While he too vanished, and left nothing but
The memory of a hero, for he looked so.

Myr. And was : the ancestor of heroes, too,
And thine no less.

Sar. Ay, Myrrha, but the woman,
The female who remained, she flew upon me,
And burnt my lips up with her noisome kisses ;
And, flinging down the goblets on each hand,
Methought their poisons flowed around us, till
Each formed a hideous river. Still she clung ;
The other phantoms, like a row of statues,
Stood dull as in our temples, but she still
Embraced me, while I shrunk from her, as if,
In lieu of her remote descendant, I
Had been the son who slew her for her incest.
Then — then — a chaos of all loathsome things

Thronged thick and shapeless: I was dead, yet
feeling —

Buried and raised again — consumed by worms,
Purged by the flames, and withered in the air!
I can fix nothing further of my thoughts,
Save that I longed for thee, and sought for thee,
In all these agonies, — and woke and found thee.

Myr. So shalt thou find me ever at thy side,
Here and hereafter, if the last may be.
But think not of these things — the mere creations
Of late events, acting upon a frame
Unused to toil, yet over-wrought by toil
Such as might try the sternest.

Sar. I am better.
Now that I see *thee* once more, *what was seen*
Seems nothing.

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. Is the king so soon awake?

Sar. Yes, brother, and I would I had not slept;
For all the predecessors of our line
Rose up, methought, to drag me down to them.
My father was amongst them, too; but he,
I know not why, kept from me, leaving me
Between the hunter-founder of our race,
And her, the homicide and husband-killer,
Whom you call glorious.

Sal. So I term you also,
Now you have shown a spirit like to hers.
By day-break I propose that we set forth,

And charge once more the rebel crew, who still
Keep gathering head, repulsed, but not quite quelled.

Sar. How wears the night?

Sal. There yet remain some hours
Of darkness: use them for your further rest.

Sar. No, not to-night, if 'tis not gone: methought
I passed hours in that vision.

Myr. Scarcely one;
I watched by you: it was a heavy hour,
But an hour only.

Sar. Let us then hold council;
To-morrow we set forth.

Sal. But ere that time,
I had a grace to seek.

Sar. 'Tis granted.

Sal. Hear it
Ere you reply too readily; and 'tis
For *your* ear only.

Myr. Prince, I take my leave.

[*Exit MYRRHA.*]

Sal. That slave deserves her freedom.

Sar. Freedom only!
That slave deserves to share a throne.

Sal. Your patience —
'Tis not yet vacant, and 'tis of its partner
I come to speak with you.

Sar. How! of the queen?

Sal. Even so. I judged it fitting for their safety,
That, ere the dawn, she sets forth with her children
For Paphlagonia, where our kinsman Cotta

Governs ; and there at all events secure
My nephews and your sons their lives, and with them
Their just pretensions to the crown in case ——

Sar. I perish — as is probable : well thought —
Let them set forth with a sure escort.

Sal. That
Is all provided, and the galley ready
To drop down the Euphrates ;* but ere they
Depart, will you not see ——

Sar. My sons ? It may
Unman my heart, and the poor boys will weep ;
And what can I reply to comfort them,
Save with some hollow hopes, and ill-worn smiles ?
You know I cannot feign.

Sal. But you can feel
At least, I trust so : in a word, the queen
Requests to see you ere you part — for ever.

Sar. Unto what end ? what purpose ? I will grant
Aught — all that she can ask — but such a meeting.

Sal. You know, or ought to know, enough of
women,
Since you have studied them so steadily,
That what they ask in aught that touches on
The heart, is dearer to their feelings or
Their fancy, than the whole external world.

* [We hardly know why Lord Byron, who has not in other respects shown a slavish deference for Diodorus Siculus, should thus follow him in the manifest geographical blunder of placing Nineveh on the *Euphrates* instead of the *Tigris*, in opposition not only to the uniform tradition of the East, but to the express assertions of Herodotus, Pliny, and Ptolemy. — HEBER.]

I think as you do of my sister's wish ;
But 't was her wish — she is my sister — you
Her husband — will you grant it ?

Sar. 'T will be useless :
But let her come.

Sal. I go. [*Exit* SALEMENES.

Sar. We have lived asunder
Too long to meet again — and *now* to meet !
Have I not cares enow, and pangs enow,
To bear alone, that we must mingle sorrows,
Who have ceased to mingle love ?

Re-enter SALEMENES and ZARINA.

Sal. My sister ! Courage :
Shame not our blood with trembling, but remember
From whence we sprung. The queen is present, sire.

Zar. I pray thee, brother, leave me.

Sal. Since you ask it.
[*Exit* SALEMENES.

Zar. Alone with him ! How many a year has
passed,
Though we are still so young, since we have met,
Which I have worn in widowhood of heart.
He loved me not : yet he seems little changed —
Changed to me only — would the change were
mutual !

He speaks not — scarce regards me — not a word —
Nor look — yet he *was* soft of voice and aspect,
Indifferent, not austere. My lord !

Sar. Zarina !

Zar. No, *not* Zarina — do not say Zarina.
That tone — that word — annihilate long years,
And things which make them longer.

Sar. 'Tis too late
To think of these past dreams. Let's not reproach —
That is, reproach me not — for the *last* time —

Zar. And *first*. I ne'er reproached you.

Sar. 'Tis most true ;
And that reproof comes heavier on my heart
Than — But our hearts are not in our own power.

Zar. Nor hands ; but I gave both.

Sar. Your brother said
It was your will to see me, ere you went
From Nineveh with — (*He hesitates*).

Zar. Our children : it is true.
I wished to thank you that you have not divided
My heart from all that's left it now to love —
Those who are yours and mine, who look like you,
And look upon me as you looked upon me
Once — But they have not changed.

Sar. Nor ever will.
I fain would have them dutiful.

Zar. I cherish
Those infants, not alone from the blind love
Of a fond mother, but as a fond woman.
They are now the only tie between us.

Sar. Deem not
I have not done you justice : rather make them
Resemble your own line than their own sire.
I trust them with you — to you : fit them for

A throne, or, if that be denied —— You have heard
Of this night's tumults?

Zar. I had half forgotten,
And could have welcomed any grief save yours,
Which gave me to behold your face again.

Sar. The throne —— I say it not in fear —— but 'tis
In peril; they perhaps may never mount it:
But let them not for this lose sight of it.
I will dare all things to bequeathe it them;
But if I fail, then they must win it back
Bravely —— and, won, wear it wisely, not as I
Have wasted down my royalty.

Zar. They ne'er
Shall know from me of aught but what may honor
Their father's memory.

Sar. Rather let them hear
The truth from you than from a trampling world.
If they be in adversity, they'll learn
Too soon the scorn of crowds for crownless princes,
And find that all their father's sins are theirs.
My boys! —— I could have borne it were I childless.

Zar. Oh! do not say so —— do not poison all
My peace left, by unwishing that thou wert
A father. If thou conquerest, they shall reign,
And honor him who saved the realm for them,
So little cared for as his own; and if ——

Sar. 'Tis lost, all earth will cry out, thank your
father!
And they will swell the echo with a curse.

Zar. That they shall never do; but rather honor

The name of him, who, dying like a king,
In his last hours did more for his own memory
Than many monarchs in a length of days,
Which date the flight of time, but make no annals.

Sar. Our annals draw perchance unto their close;
But at the least, whate'er the past, their end
Shall be like their beginning — memorable.

Zar. Yet, be not rash — be careful of your life,
Live but for those who love.

Sar. And who are they?
A slave, who loves from passion — I'll not say
Ambition — she has seen thrones shake, and loves;
A few friends who have revelled till we are
As one, for they are nothing if I fall;
A brother I have injured — children whom
I have neglected, and a spouse —

Zar. Who loves.

Sar. And pardons?

Zar. I have never thought of this,
And cannot pardon till I have condemned.

Sar. My wife!

Zar. Now blessings on thee for that word!
I never thought to hear it more — from thee.

Sar. Oh! thou wilt hear it from my subjects.

Yes —

These slaves whom I have nurtured, pampered, fed,
And swoln with peace, and gorged with plenty, till
They reign themselves — all monarchs in their
mansions —

Now swarm forth in rebellion, and demand

His death, who made their lives a jubilee;
While the few upon whom I have no claim
Are faithful! This is true, yet monstrous.

Zar.

'Tis

Perhaps too natural; for benefits
Turn poison in bad minds.

Sar.

And good ones make

Good out of evil. Happier than the bee,
Which hives not but from wholesome flowers.

Zar.

Then reap

The honey, nor inquire whence 'tis derived.
Be satisfied — you are not all abandoned.

Sar. My life insures me that. How long, bethink
you,

Were not I yet a king, should I be mortal;
That is, where mortals *are*, not where they must be?

Zar. I know not. But yet live for my — that is,
Your children's sake!

Sar.

My gentle, wronged Zarina!*

I am the very slave of circumstance

* [We are not sure, whether there is not a considerable violation of costume in the sense of degradation with which Myrrha seems to regard her situation in the harem, no less than in the resentment of Salemenes, and the remorse of Sardanapalus on the score of his infidelity to Zarina. Little as we know of the domestic habits of Assyria, we have reason to conclude, from the habits of contemporary nations, and from the manners of the East in every age, that polygamy was neither accounted a crime in itself, nor as a measure of which the principal wife was justified in complaining. And even in Greece, in those times when Myrrha's character must have been formed, — to be a captive, and subject to the captor's pleasure, was ac-

And impulse — borne away with every breath!
Misplaced upon the throne — misplaced in life.
I know not what I could have been, but feel
I am not what I should be — let it end.
But take this with thee: if I was not formed
To prize a love like thine, a mind like thine,
Nor dote even on thy beauty — as I've doted
On lesser charms, for no cause save that such
Devotion was a duty, and I hated
All that looked like a chain for me or others
(This even rebellion must avouch); yet hear
These words, perhaps among my last — that none
E'er valued more thy virtues, though he knew not
To profit by them — as the miner lights
Upon a vein of virgin ore, discovering
That which avails him nothing: he hath found it,
But 'tis not his — but some superior's, who
Placed him to dig, but not divide the wealth
Which sparkles at his feet; nor dare he lift
Nor poise it, but must grovel on, upturning
The sullen earth.

Zar. Oh! if thou hast at length
Discovered that my love is worth esteem,
I ask no more — but let us hence together,
And *I* — let me say *we* — shall yet be happy.
Assyria is not all the earth — we'll find

counted a misfortune indeed, but could hardly be regarded as an infamy. But where is the critic who would object to an inaccuracy which has given occasion to such sentiments and such poetry? — *HEBER.*]

A world out of our own — and be more blessed
Than I have ever been, or thou, with all
An empire to indulge thee.

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. I must part ye —
The moments, which must not be lost, are passing.

Zar. Inhuman brother! wilt thou thus weigh out
Instants so high and blest?

Sal. Blest!

Zar. He hath been
So gentle with me, that I cannot think
Of quitting.

Sal. So — this feminine farewell
Ends as such partings end, in *no* departure.
I thought as much, and yielded against all
My better bodings. But it must not be.

Zar. Not be?

Sal. Remain, and perish —

Zar. With my husband —

Sal. And children.

Zar. Alas!

Sal. Hear me, sister, like
My sister: — all 's prepared to make your safety
Certain, and of the boys too, our last hopes;
'Tis not a single question of mere feeling,
Though that were much — but 'tis a point of state:
The rebels would do more to seize upon
The offspring of their sovereign, and so crush —

Zar. Ah! do not name it.

Sal. Well, then, mark me : when
They are safe beyond the Median's grasp, the rebels
Have missed their chief aim — the extinction of
The line of Nimrod. Though the present king
Fall, his sons live for victory and vengeance.

Zar. But could not I remain, alone ?

Sal. What ! leave
Your children, with two parents and yet orphans —
In a strange land — so young, so distant ?

Zar. No —
My heart will break.

Sal. Now you know all — decide.

Sar. Zarina, he hath spoken well, and we
Must yield awhile to this necessity.
Remaining here, you may lose all ; departing,
You save the better part of what is left,
To both of us, and to such loyal hearts
As yet beat in these kingdoms.

Sal. The time presses.

Sar. Go, then. If e'er we meet again, perhaps
I may be worthier of you — and, if not,
Remember that my faults, though not atoned for,
Are ended. Yet, I dread thy nature will
Grieve more above the blighted name and ashes
Which once were mightiest in Assyria — than ———
But I grow womanish again, and must not ;
I must learn sternness now. My sins have all
Been of the softer order — *hide* thy tears —
I do not bid thee *not* to shed them — 't were
Easier to stop Euphrates at its source

Than one tear of a true and tender heart —
But let me not behold them; they unman me
Here when I had remanned myself. My brother,
Lead her away.

Zar. Oh, God! I never shall
Behold him more!

Sal. (*striving to conduct her*). Nay, sister, I *must*
be obeyed.

Zar. I must remain — away! you shall not hold
me.

What, shall he die alone? — *I* live alone?

Sal. He shall *not die alone*; but lonely you
Have lived for years.

Zar. That's false! I knew *he* lived,
And lived upon his image — let me go!

Sal. (*conducting her off the stage*). Nay, then, I
must use some fraternal force,
Which you will pardon.

Zar. Never. Help me! Oh!
Sardanapalus, wilt thou thus behold me
Torn from thee?

Sal. Nay — then all is lost again,
If that this moment is not gained.

Zar. My brain turns —
My eyes fail — where is he? [*She faints.*]

Sar. (*advancing*). No — set her down —
She's dead — and you have slain her.

Sal. 'Tis the mere
Faintness of o'erwrought passion: in the air
She will recover. Pray, keep back. — [*Aside.*] I
must

Avail myself of this sole moment to
Bear her to where her children are embarked,
I' the royal galley on the river.

[SALEMENES *bears her off*.*]

Sar. (solus). This, too —
And this too must I suffer — I, who never
Inflicted purposely on human hearts
A voluntary pang! But that is false —
She loved me, and I loved her. — Fatal passion!
Why dost thou not expire *at once* in hearts
Which thou hast lighted up at once? Zarina!
I must pay dearly for the desolation
Now brought upon thee. Had I never loved
But thee, I should have been an unopposed
Monarch of honoring nations. To what gulfs
A single deviation from the track
Of human duties leads even those who claim
The homage of mankind as their born due,
And find it, till they forfeit it themselves!

* [This scene has been, we know not why, called “useless,” “unnatural,” and “tediously written.” † For ourselves, we are not ashamed to own that we have read it with emotion. It is an interview between Sardanapalus and his neglected wife, whom, with her children, he is about to send to a place of safety. Here, too, however, he is represented, with much poetical art and justice of delineation, as, in the midst of his deepest regrets for Zarina, chiefly engrossed with himself and his own sorrows, and inclined, immediately afterwards, to visit on poor Myrrha the painful feelings which his own reproaches of himself have occasioned. — HEBER.]

† [These expressions occurred in the Edinburgh Review.]

Enter MYRRHA.

Sar. *You* here! Who called you?

Myr. No one — but I heard
Far off a voice of wail and lamentation,
And thought ——

Sar. It forms no portion of your duties
To enter here till sought for.

Myr. Though I might,
Perhaps, recall some softer words of yours [me,
(Although they *too were chiding*), which reprov'd
Because I ever dreaded to intrude;
Resisting my own wish and your injunction
To heed no time nor presence, but approach you
Uncalled for: — I retire.

Sar. Yet stay — being here.
I pray you pardon me: events have soured me
Till I wax peevish — heed it not: I shall
Soon be myself again.

Myr. I wait with patience,
What I shall see with pleasure.

Sar. Scarce a moment
Before your entrance in this hall, Zarina,
Queen of Assyria, departed hence.

Myr. Ah!

Sar. Wherefore do you start?

Myr. Did I do so?

Sar. 'Twas well you entered by another portal,
Else you had met. That pang at least is spared her!

Myr. I know to feel for her.

Sar. That is too much,
And beyond nature — 'tis nor mutual*
Nor possible. You cannot pity her,
Nor she aught but ——

Myr. Despise the favorite slave?
Not more than I have ever scorned myself.

Sar. Scorned! what, to be the envy of your sex,
And lord it o'er the heart of the world's lord?

Myr. Were you the lord of twice ten thousand
worlds ——

As you are like to lose the one you swayed ——
I did abase myself as much in being
Your paramour, as though you were a peasant ——
Nay, more, if that the peasant were a Greek.

Sar. You talk it well ——

Myr. And truly.

Sar. In the hour
Of man's adversity all things grow daring
Against the falling; but as I am not
Quite fallen, nor now disposed to bear reproaches,
Perhaps because I merit them too often,
Let us then part while peace is still between us.

Myr. Part!

Sar. Have not all past human beings parted,
And must not all the present one day part?

Myr. Why?

Sar. For your safety, which I will have looked to,
With a strong escort to your native land;

* [For *mutual*, the MS. has *natural*; which certainly seems better.]

And such gifts, as, if you had not been all
A queen, shall make your dowry worth a kingdom.

Myr. I pray you talk not thus.

Sar. The queen is gone :
You need not shame to follow. I would fall
Alone — I seek no partners but in pleasure.

Myr. And I no pleasure but in parting not.
You shall not force me from you.

Sar. Think well of it —
It soon may be too late.

Myr. So let it be ;
For then you cannot separate me from you.

Sar. And will not ; but I thought you wished it.

Myr. I !

Sar. You spoke of your abasement.

Myr. And I feel it
Deeply — more deeply than all things but love.

Sar. Then fly from it.

Myr. 'Twill not recall the past —
'Twill not restore my honor, nor my heart.
No — here I stand or fall. If that you conquer,
I live to joy in your great triumph : should
Your lot be different, I'll not weep, but share it.
You did not doubt me a few hours ago.

Sar. Your courage never — nor your love till
now,
And none could make me doubt it save yourself.
Those words —

Myr. Were words. I pray you, let the proofs
Be in the past acts you were pleased to praise

This very night, and in my further bearing,
Beside, wherever you were borne by fate.

Sar. I am content: and, trusting in my cause,
Think we may yet be victors and return
To peace — the only victory I covet.
To me war is no glory — conquest no
Renown. To be forced thus to uphold my right
Sits heavier on my heart than all the wrongs
These men would bow me down with. Never, never
Can I forget this night, even should I live
To add it to the memory of others.

I thought to have made mine inoffensive rule
An era of sweet peace 'midst bloody annals,
A green spot amidst desert centuries,
On which the future would turn back and smile,
And cultivate, or sigh when it could not
Recall Sardanapalus' golden reign.
I thought to have made my realm a paradise,
And every moon an epoch of new pleasures.
I took the rabble's shouts for love — the breath
Of friends for truth — the lips of woman for
My only guerdon — so they are, my Myrrha:

[*He kisses her.*]

Kiss me. Now let them take my realm and life!
They shall have both, but never thee!

Myr.

No, never!

Man may despoil his brother man of all
That's great or glittering — kingdoms fall — hosts
yield —
Friends fail — slaves fly — and all betray — and.
more

Than all, the most indebted — but a heart
That loves without self-love! 'Tis here — now
prove it.

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. I sought you — How? *she* here again?

Sar. Return not

Now to reproof: methinks your aspect speaks
Of higher matter than a woman's presence.

Sal. The only woman whom it much imports me
At such a moment now is safe in absence —
The queen's embarked.

Sar. And well? say that much.

Sal. Yes.

Her transient weakness has passed o'er; at least,
It settled into tearless silence: her
Pale face and glittering eye, after a glance
Upon her sleeping children, were still fixed
Upon the palace towers as the swift galley
Stole down the hurrying stream beneath the star-
light;

But she said nothing.

Sar. Would I felt no more

Than she has said!

Sal. 'Tis now too late to feel!

Your feelings cannot cancel a sole pang:
To change them, my advices bring sure tidings
That the rebellious Medes and Chaldees, marshalled
By their two leaders, are already up
In arms again; and, serrying their ranks,

Prepare to attack : they have apparently
Been joined by other satraps.

Sar. What ! more rebels ?
Let us be first, then.

Sal. That were hardly prudent
Now, though it was our first intention. If
By noon to-morrow we are joined by those
I've sent for by sure messengers, we shall be
In strength enough to venture an attack,
Ay, and pursuit too ; but till then, my voice
Is to await the onset.

Sar. I detest
That waiting ; though it seems so safe to fight
Behind high walls, and hurl down foes into
Deep fosses, or behold them sprawl on spikes
Strewed to receive them, still I like it not —
My soul seems lukewarm ; but when I set on them,
Though they were piled on mountains, I would
have

A pluck at them, or perish in hot blood ! —
Let me then charge.

Sal. You talk like a young soldier.

Sar. I am no soldier, but a man : speak not
Of soldiership, I loathe the word, and those
Who pride themselves upon it ; but direct me
Where I may pour upon them.

Sal. You must spare
To expose your life too hastily ; 't is not
Like mine or any other subject's breath .
The whole war turns upon it — with it ; this

Alone creates it, kindles, and may quench it —
Prolong it — end it.

Sar. Then let us end both !
'T were better thus, perhaps, than prolong either ;
I'm sick of one, perchance of both.

[A trumpet sounds without.

Sal. Hark !

Sar. Let us
Reply, not listen.

Sal. And your wound !

Sar. 'T is bound —
'T is healed — I had forgotten it. Away !
A leech's lancet would have scratched me deeper ;*
The slave that gave it might be well ashamed
To have struck so weakly.

Sal. Now, may none this hour
Strike with a better aim !

Sar. Ay, if we conquer ;
But if not, they will only leave to me
A task they might have spared their king. Upon
them ! *[Trumpet sounds again.*

Sal. I am with you.

Sar. Ho, my arms ! again, my arms !
[Exeunt.

* [MS. — " A leech's lancet would have done as much."]

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The same Hall in the Palace.

MYRRHA and BALEA.

Myr. (at a window). The day at last has broken.

What a night

Hath ushered it! How beautiful in heaven!

Though varied with a transitory storm,

More beautiful in that variety!

How hideous upon earth! where peace and hope,

And love and revel, in an hour were trampled

By human passions to a human chaos,

Not yet resolved to separate elements —

'Tis warring still! And can the sun so rise,

So bright, so rolling back the clouds into

Vapors more lovely than the unclouded sky,

With golden pinnacles, and snowy mountains,

And billows purpler than the ocean's, making

In heaven a glorious mockery of the earth,

So like we almost deem it permanent;

So fleeting, we can scarcely call it aught

Beyond a vision, 't is so transiently

Scattered along the eternal vault: * and yet

* [This description of the sun rolling back the vapors is apparently imitated from a magnificent scene in the second book of Wordsworth's *Excursion*: —

—— “Round them and above,
Glitter, with dark recesses interposed

It dwells upon the soul, and soothes the soul,
 And blends itself into the soul, until
 Sunrise and sunset form the haunted epoch
 Of sorrow and of love; which they who mark not,
 Know not the realms where those twin genii *
 (Who chasten and who purify our hearts,
 So that we would not change their sweet rebukes
 For all the boisterous joys that ever shook
 The air with clamor) build the palaces
 Where their fond votaries repose and breathe
 Briefly; — but in that brief cool calm inhale
 Enough of heaven to enable them to bear
 The rest of common, heavy, human hours,
 And dream them through in placid sufferance;
 Though seemingly employed like all the rest
 Of toiling breathers in allotted tasks †
 Of pain or pleasure, *two* names for *one* feeling,
 Which our internal, restless agony
 Would vary in the sound, although the sense
 Escapes our highest efforts to be happy.

Bal. You muse right calmly: and can you so
 watch

The sunrise which may be our last?

Casement, and cottage-roof, and stems of trees
 Half-veiled in vapping cloud, the silver steam
 Of dews fast melting on their leafy boughs
 By the strong sunbeams smitten.”]

* [MS. — “ Sunrise and sunset form the epoch of
 Sorrow and love; and they who mark them not
 Can ne’er hold converse with,” etc.]

† [MS — “ Of laboring wretches in allotted tasks.”]

Myr. It is
Therefore that I so watch it, and reproach
Those eyes, which never may behold it more,
For having looked upon it oft, too oft,
Without the reverence and the rapture due
To that which keeps all earth from being as fragile
As I am in this form. Come, look upon it,
The Chaldee's god, which, when I gaze upon,
I grow almost a convert to your Baal.

Bal. As now he reigns in heaven, so once on earth
He swayed.

Myr. He sways it now far more, then ; never
Had earthly monarch half the power and glory *
Which centres in a single ray of his.

Bal. Surely he is a god !

Myr. So we Greeks deem too :
And yet I sometimes think that gorgeous orb
Must rather be the abode of gods than one
Of the immortal sovereigns. Now he breaks
Through all the clouds, and fills my eyes with light
That shuts the world out. I can look no more.

Bal. Hark! heard you not a sound?

Myr. No, 't was mere fancy ;
They battle it beyond the wall, and not
As in late midnight conflict in the very
Chambers : the palace has become a fortress
Since that insidious hour ; and here, within
The very centre, girded by vast courts

And regal halls of pyramid proportions,
Which must be carried one by one before
They penetrate to where they then arrived,
We are as much shut in even from the sound
Of peril as from glory.

Bal. But they reached
Thus far before.

Myr. Yes, by surprise, and were
Beat back by valor: now at once we have
Courage and vigilance to guard us.

Bal. May they
Prosper!

Myr. That is the prayer of many, and
The dread of more: it is an anxious hour;
I strive to keep it from my thoughts. Alas!
How vainly!

Bal. It is said the king's demeanor
In the late action scarcely more appalled
The rebels than astonished his true subjects.

Myr. 'Tis easy to astonish or appall
The vulgar mass which moulds a horde of slaves;
But he did bravely.

Bal. Slew he not Beleses?
I heard the soldiers say he struck him down.

Myr. The wretch was overthrown, but rescued to
Triumph, perhaps, o'er one who vanquished him
In fight, as he had spared him in his peril;
And by that heedless pity risked a crown.

Bal. Hark! [slowly.

Myr. You are right; some steps approach. but

Enter Soldiers, bearing in SALEMENES wounded, with a broken Javelin in his Side: they seat him upon one of the Couches which furnish the Apartment.

Myr. Oh, Jove!

Bal. Then all is over.

Sal. That is false.

Hew down the slave who says so, if a soldier.

Myr. Spare him — he's none: a mere court butterfly,

That flutters in the pageant of a monarch.

Sal. Let him live on, then.

Myr. So wilt thou, I trust.

Sal. I fain would live this hour out, and the event,
But doubt it. Wherefore did ye bear me here?

Sol. By the king's order. When the javelin struck you,

You fell and fainted: 'twas his strict command
To bear you to this hall.

Sal. 'T was not ill done:
For seeming slain in that cold dizzy trance,
The sight might shake our soldiers — but — 'tis
vain,

I feel it ebbing!

Myr. Let me see the wound;
I am not quite skilless: in my native land
'Tis part of our instruction. War being constant,
We are nerved to look on such things.*

* [MS. — "We are used to such inflictions."]

Sol. Best extract
The javelin.

Myr. Hold! no, no, it cannot be.

Sal. I am sped, then!

Myr. With the blood that fast must follow
The extracted weapon, I do fear thy life.

Sal. And I *not* death. Where was the king
when you
Conveyed me from the spot where I was stricken?

Sol. Upon the same ground, and encouraging
With voice and gesture the dispirited troops
Who had seen you fall, and faltered back.

Sal. Whom heard ye
Named next to the command?

Sol. I did not hear.

Sal. Fly, then, and tell him, 'twas my last
request

That Zames take my post until the junction,
So hoped for, yet delayed, of Ofratanes,
Satrap of Susa. Leave me here: our troops
Are not so numerous as to spare your absence.

Sol. But prince ——

Sal. Hence, I say! Here's a courtier and
A woman, the best chamber company.
As you would not permit me to expire
Upon the field, I'll have no idle soldiers
About my sick couch. Hence! and do my bidding!

[*Exeunt the Soldiers*]

Myr. Gallant and glorious spirit! must the earth
So soon resign thee?

Sal. Gentle Myrrha, 'tis
The end I would have chosen, had I saved
The monarch or the monarchy by this ;
As 'tis, I have not outlived them.

Myr. You wax paler.

Sal. Your hand ; this broken weapon but prolongs
My pangs, without sustaining life enough
To make me useful : I would draw it forth
And my life with it, could I but hear how
The fight goes.

Enter SARDANAPALUS and soldiers.

Sar. My best brother !

Sal. And the battle
Is lost ?

Sar. (despondingly). You see *me here*.

Sal. I'd rather see you *thus* !

*[He draws out the weapon from the wound,
and dies.]*

Sar. And *thus* I will be seen ; unless the succor,
The last frail reed of our beleaguered hopes,
Arrive with Ofratanes.

Myr. Did you not
Receive a token from your dying brother,
Appointing Zames chief ?

Sar. I did.

Myr. Where's Zames ?

Sar. Dead.

Myr. And Altada ?

Sar. Dying.

Myr. Pania ? Sfero ?

Sar. Pania yet lives : but Sfero's fled or captive.
I am alone.

Myr. And is all lost ?

Sar. Our walls,
Though thinly manned, may still hold out against
Their present force, or aught save treachery :
But i' the field ——

Myr. I thought 't was the intent
Of Salemenes not to risk a sally
Till ye were strengthened by the expected suc-
cors.

Sar. I over-ruled him.

Myr. Well, the fault's a brave one.

Sar. But fatal. Oh, my brother ! I would give
These realms, of which thou wert the ornament,
The sword and shield, the sole-redeeming honor,
To call back —— But I will not weep for thee ;
Thou shalt be mourned for as thou wouldst be
mourned.

It grieves me most that thou couldst quit this life
Believing that I could survive what thou
Hast died for — our long royalty of race.
If I redeem it, I will give thee blood
Of thousands, tears of millions, for atonement
(The tears of all the good are thine already).
If not, we meet again soon, — if the spirit
Within us lives beyond : — thou readest mine,
And dost me justice now. Let me once clasp
That yet warm hand, and fold that throbless heart
[*Embraces the body.*]

To this which beats so bitterly. Now, bear
The body hence.

Soldier. Where?

Sar. To my proper chamber.
Place it beneath my canopy, as though
The king lay there: when this is done, we will
Speak further of the rites due to such ashes.

[Exeunt Soldiers with the body of SALEMENES.]

Enter PANIA.

Sar. Well, Pania! have you placed the guards,
and issued
The orders fixed on?

Pan. Sire, I have obeyed.

Sar. And do the soldiers keep their hearts up?

Pan. Sire?

Sar. I'm answered! When a king asks twice,
and has

A question as an answer to *his* question,
It is a portent. What! they are disheartened?

Pan. The death of Salemenes, and the shouts
Of the exulting rebels on his fall,
Have made them ——

Sar. *Rage* — not droop — it should have been.
We'll find the means to rouse them.

Pan. Such a loss
Might sadden even a victory.

Sar. Alas!
Who can so feel it as I feel? but yet, [and we
Though cooped within these walls, they are strong,

Have those without will break their way through
hosts,
To make their sovereign's dwelling what it was —
A palace ; not a prison, nor a fortress.

Enter an Officer, hastily.

Sar. Thy face seems ominous. Speak !

Offi. I dare not.

Sar. Dare not ?

While millions dare revolt with sword in hand !
That's strange. I pray thee break that loyal silence
Which loathes to shock its sovereign ; we can hear
Worse than thou hast to tell.

Pan. Proceed, thou hearest.

Offi. The wall which skirted near the river's brink
Is thrown down by the sudden inundation
Of the Euphrates, which now rolling, swoln
From the enormous mountains where it rises,
By the late rains of that tempestuous region,
O'erfloods its banks, and hath destroyed the bulwark.

Pan. That's a black augury ! it has been said
For ages, "That the city ne'er should yield
To man, until the river grew its foe."

Sar. I can forgive the omen, not the ravage.
How much is swept down of the wall ?

Offi. About
Some twenty stadii.*

Sar. And all this is left
Pervious to the assailants ?

* About two miles and a half

Offi. For the present
The river's fury must impede the assault;
But when he shrinks into his wonted channel,
And may be crossed by the accustomed barks,
The palace is their own.

Sar. That shall be never.
Though men, and gods, and elements, and omens,
Have risen up 'gainst one who ne'er provoked them,
My father's house shall never be a cave
For wolves to horde and howl in.

Pan. With your sanction,
I will proceed to the spot, and take such measures
For the assurance of the vacant space
As time and means permit.

Sar. About it straight
And bring me back, as speedily as full
And fair investigation may permit,
Report of the true state of this irruption
Of waters. [*Exeunt PANIA and the Officer.*]

Myr. Thus the very waves rise up
Against you.

Sar. They are not my subjects, girl,
And may be pardoned, since they can't be pun-
ished.

Myr. I joy to see this portent shakes you not.

Sar. I am past the fear of portents: they can
tell me

Nothing I have not told myself since midnight:
Despair anticipates such things.

Myr.

Despair!

Sar. No; not despair precisely. When we know
All that can come, and how to meet it, our
Resolves, if firm, may merit a more noble
Word than this is to give it utterance.
But what are words to us? we have wellnigh done
With them and all things.

Myr. Save *one deed* — the last
And greatest to all mortals; crowning act
Of all that was — or is — or is to be —
The only thing common to all mankind,
So different in their births, tongues, sexes, natures,
Hues, features, climes, times, feelings, intellects,*
Without one point of union save in this,
To which we tend, for which we're born, and
thread
The labyrinth of mystery, called life.

Sar. Our clew being wellnigh wound out, let's
be cheerful.
They who have nothing more to fear may well
Indulge a smile at that which once appalled;
As children at discovered bugbears.

Reënter PANIA.

Pan. 'Tis
As was reported: I have ordered there
A double guard, withdrawing from the wall
Where it was strongest the required addition
To watch the breach occasioned by the waters.

* [MS. — "Complexions, climes, eras, and intellects.]

Sar. You have done your duty faithfully, and as
My worthy Pania! further ties between us
Draw near a close. I pray you take this key :

[*Gives a key.*

It opens to a secret chamber, placed
Behind the couch in my own chamber. (Now
Pressed by a nobler weight than e'er it bore —
Though a long line of sovereigns have lain down
Along its golden frame — as bearing for
A time what late was Salemenes). Search
The secret covert to which this will lead you ;
'Tis full of treasure ;* take it for yourself
And your companions : there's enough to load ye
Though ye be many.† Let the slaves be freed, too :
And all the inmates of the palace, of
Whatever sex, now quit it in an hour.
Thence launch the regal barks, once formed for
pleasure,
And now to serve for safety, and embark.
The river's broad and swoln, and uncommanded
(More potent than a king) by these besiegers.
Fly ! and be happy !

* [“ Athenæus makes these treasures amount to a thousand
myriads of talents of gold, and ten times as many talents of
silver, which is a sum that exceeds all credibility. A man is
lost if he attempts to sum up the whole value ; which induces
me to believe, that Athenæus must have very much exag-
gerated ; however, we may be assured, from his account, that
the treasures were immensely great.” — ROLLIN.]

† [MS. ——— “ Ye will find the crevice
To which the key fits, with a little care.”]

Pan. Under your protection!
So you accompany your faithful guard.

Sar. No, Pania! that must not be; get thee
hence,
And leave me to my fate.

Pan. 'Tis the first time
I ever disobeyed: but now ——

Sar. So all men
Dare beard me now, and Insolence within
Apes Treason from without. Question no further;
'Tis my command, my last command. Wilt *thou*
Oppose it? *thou*!

Pan. But yet — not yet.

Sar. Well, then,
Swear that you will obey when I shall give
The signal.

Pan. With a heavy but true heart,
I promise.

Sar. 'Tis enough. Now order here
Fagots, pine-nuts, and withered leaves, and such*
Things as catch fire and blaze with one sole spark;
Bring cedar, too, and precious drugs, and spices,
And mighty planks, to nourish a tall pile;
Bring frankincense and myrrh, too, for it is
For a great sacrifice I build the pyre;
And heap them round yon throne.

Pan. My lord!

Sar. I have said it,
And *you* have sworn.

* [MS. —— "Now order here
Enough of dry wood," etc.]

Pan. And could keep my faith
Without a vow. [Exit PANIA.]

Myr. What mean you?

Sar. You shall know
Anon — what the whole earth shall ne'er forget.

PANIA, returning with a Herald.

Pan. My king, in going forth upon my duty,
This herald has been brought before me, craving
An audience.

Sar. Let him speak.

Her. The *King* Arbaces ——

Sar. What, crowned already? — But, proceed.

Her. Beleses,
The anointed high-priest ——

Sar. Of what god or demon?
With new kings rise new altars. But, proceed;
You are sent to prate your master's will, and not
Reply to mine.

Her. And Satrap Ofratanes ——

Sar. Why, *he* is *ours*.

Her. (*showing a ring*). Be sure that he is now
In the camp of the conquerors; behold
His signet ring.

Sar. 'Tis his. A worthy triad!
Poor Salemenes! thou hast died in time
To see one treachery the less: this man
Was thy true friend and my most trusted subject.
Proceed.

Her. They offer thee thy life, and freedom
Of choice to single out a residence
In any of the further provinces,
Guarded and watched, but not confined in person,
Where thou shalt pass thy days in peace ; but on
Condition that the three young princes are
Given up as hostages.

Sar. (ironically). The generous victors !

Her. I wait the answer.

Sar. Answer, slave ! How long
Have slaves decided on the doom of kings ?

Her. Since they were free.

Sar. Mouthpiece of mutiny !
Thou at the least shalt learn the penalty
Of treason, though its proxy only. Pania !
Let his head be thrown from our walls within
The rebels' lines, his carcass down the river.
Away with him !

[PANIA and the Guards seizing him.]

Pan. I never yet obeyed
Your orders with more pleasure than the present.
Hence with him, soldiers ! do not soil this hall
Of royalty with treasonable gore ;
Put him to rest without.

Her. A single word :
My office, king, is sacred.

Sar. And what's *mine* ?
That thou shouldst come and dare to ask of me
To lay it down ?

Her. I but obeyed my orders,
At the same peril if refused, as now
Incurred by my obedience.

Sar. So there are
New monarchs of an hour's growth as despotic
As sovereigns swathed in purple, and enthroned
From birth to manhood !

Her. My life waits your breath.
Yours (I speak humbly) — but it may be — yours
May also be in danger scarce less imminent :
Would it then suit the last hours of a line
Such as is that of Nimrod, to destroy
A peaceful herald, unarmed, in his office ;
And violate not only all that man
Holds sacred between man and man — but that
More holy tie which links us with the gods ?

Sar. He's right. — Let him go free. — My life's
last act
Shall not be one of wrath. Here, fellow, take
[*Gives him a golden cup from a table near.*
This golden goblet, let it hold your wine,
And think of *me* ; or melt it into ingots,
And think of nothing but their weight and value.

Her. I thank you doubly for my life, and this
Most gorgeous gift, which renders it more precious.
But must I bear no answer ?

Sar. Yes, — I ask
An hour's truce to consider.

Her. But an hour's ?

Sar. An hour's : if at the expiration of

That time your masters hear no further from me,
They are to deem that I reject their terms,
And act befittingly.

Her. I shall not fail
To be a faithful legate of your pleasure.

Sar. And hark! a word more.

Her. I shall not forget it,
Whate'er it be.

Sar. Commend me to Beleses;
And tell him, ere a year expire, I summon
Him hence to meet me.

Her. Where?

Sar. At Babylon.
At least from thence he will depart to meet me.

Her. I shall obey you to the letter. [*Exit Herald.*

Sar. Pania! —
Now, my good Pania! — quick — with what I
ordered.

Pan. My lord, — the soldiers are already charged.
And see! they enter.

[*Soldiers enter, and form a Pile about the Throne, etc.*

Sar. Higher, my good soldiers,
And thicker yet; and see that the foundation
Be such as will not speedily exhaust
Its own too subtle flame; nor yet be quenched
With aught officious aid would bring to quell it.
Let the throne form the *core* of it; I would not
Leave that, save fraught with fire unquenchable,
To the new comers. Frame the whole as if
'T were to enkindle the strong tower of our

Inveterate enemies. Now it bears an aspect !
How say you, Pania, will this pile suffice
For a king's obsequies ?

Pan. Ay, for a kingdom's.
I understand you, now.

Sar. And blame me ?

Pan. No —
Let me but fire the pile, and share it with you.

Myr. That duty's mine.

Pan. A woman's !

Myr. 'Tis the soldier's —
Part to die *for* his sovereign, and why not
The woman's with her lover ?

Pan. 'Tis most strange !

Myr. But not so rare, my Pania, as thou think'st it.
In the mean time, live thou. — Farewell ! the pile
Is ready.

Pan. I should shame to leave my sovereign
With but a single female to partake
His death.

Sar. Too many far have heralded
Me to the dust, already. Get thee hence ;
Enrich thee.

Pan. And live wretched !

Sar. Think upon
Thy vow : — 'tis sacred and irrevocable.

Pan. Since it is so, farewell.

Sar. Search well my chamber,
Feel no remorse at bearing off the gold ;
Remember what you leave you leave the slaves

Who slew me : and when you have borne away
All safe off to your boats, blow one long blast
Upon the trumpet as you quit the palace.
The river's brink is too remote, its stream
Too loud at present to permit the echo
To reach distinctly from its banks. Then fly, —
And as you sail, turn back ; but still keep on
Your way along the Euphrates : if you reach
The land of Paphlagonia, where the queen
Is safe with my three sons in Cotta's court,
Say, what you *saw* at parting, and request
That she remember what I *said* at one
Parting more mournful still.

Pan.

That royal hand !

Let me then once more press it to my lips ;
And these poor soldiers who throng round you, and
Would fain die with you !

[*The soldiers and PANIA throng round him,
kissing his hand and the hem of his robe.*]

Sar.

My best ! my last friends !

Let's not unman each other : part at once :
All farewells should be sudden, when for ever,
Else they make an eternity of moments,
And clog the last sad sands of life with tears.
Hence, and be happy : trust me, I am not
Now to be pitied ; or far more for what
Is past than present ; — for the future, 'tis
In the hands of the deities, if such
There be : I shall know soon. Farewell — Farewell.

[*Exeunt PANIA and Soldiers.*]

The least of matter unconsumed before
Its fiery workings:— and the light of this
Most royal of funereal pyres shall be
Not a mere pillar formed of cloud and flame,
A beacon in the horizon for a day,
And then a mount of ashes, but a light
To lesson ages, rebel nations, and
Voluptuous princes. Time shall quench full many
A people's records, and a hero's acts;
Sweep empire after empire, like this first
Of empires, into nothing; but even then
Shall spare this deed of mine, and hold it up
A problem few dare imitate, and none
Despise — but, it may be, avoid the life
Which led to such a consummation.

MYRRHA *returns with a lighted Torch in one Hand,
and a Cup in the other.*

Myr.

Lo!

I've lit the lamp which lights us to the stars.

Sar. And the cup?

Myr.

'T is my country's custom to
Make a libation to the gods.

Sar.

And mine

To make libations amongst men. I've not
Forgot the custom; and although alone,
Will drain one draught in memory of many
A joyous banquet past.

[SARDANAPALUS *takes the cup, and after drinking
and tinkling the reversed cup, as a drop falls,
exclaims —*

And this libation
Is for the excellent Beleses.

Myr. Why
Dwells thy mind rather upon that man's name
Than on his mate's in villany?

Sar. The one
Is a mere soldier, a mere tool, a kind
Of human sword in a friend's hand; the other
Is master-mover of his warlike puppet:
But I dismiss them from my mind. — Yet pause,
My Myrrha! dost thou truly follow me,
Freely and fearlessly?

Myr. And dost thou think
A Greek girl dare not do for love, that which
An Indian widow braves for custom? *

Sar. Then
We but await the signal.

Myr. It is long
In sounding.

Sar. Now, farewell; one last embrace.

Myr. Embrace, but *not* the last; there is one more.

Sar. True, the commingling fire will mix our
ashes.

Myr. And pure as is my love to thee, shall they,
Purged from the dross of earth, and earthly passion,
Mix pale with thine. A single thought yet irks me.

Sar. Say it.

* [MS. ——— “ And what is there
An Indian widow dares for custom, which
A Greek girl dare not do for love? ”]

Myr. It is that no kind hand will gather
The dust of both into one urn.

Sar. The better :
Rather let them be borne abroad upon
The winds of heaven, and scattered into air,
Than be polluted more by human hands
Of slaves and traitors. In this blazing palace,
And its enormous walls of reeking ruin,
We leave a nobler monument than Egypt
Hath piled in her brick mountains, o'er dead kings,*
Or *kine*, for none know whether those proud piles
Be for their monarch, or their ox-god Apis :
So much for monuments that have forgotten
Their very record !

Myr. Then farewell, thou earth !
And loveliest spot of earth ! farewell, Ionia !
Be thou still free and beautiful, and far

* [These lines are in bad taste enough, from jingle between *kings* and *kine*, down to the absurdity of believing that Sardanapalus at such a moment would be likely to discuss a point of antiquarian curiosity. But they involve also an anachronism, inasmuch as, whatever date be assigned to the erection of the earlier pyramids, there can be no reason for apprehending that, at the fall of Nineveh, and while the kingdom and hierarchy of Egypt subsisted in their full splendor, the destination of those immense fabrics could have been a matter of doubt to any who might inquire concerning them. Herodotus, three hundred years later, may have been misinformed of these points ; but, when Sardanapalus lived, the erection of pyramids must, in all probability, have not been still of unfrequent occurrence, and the nature of their contents no subject of mistake or mystery. — HEBER.]

Aloof from desolation! My last prayer
Was for thee, my last thoughts, save *one*, were of
thee!

Sar. And that?

Myr. Is yours.

[*The trumpet of PANIA sounds without.*

Sar. Hark!

Myr. Now!

Sar. Adieu, Assyria!

I loved thee well, my own, my fathers' land,
And better as my country than my kingdom.
I sated thee with peace and joys; and this
Is my reward! and now I owe thee nothing,
Not even a grave. [*He mounts the pile.*

Now, Myrrha!

Myr. Art thou ready?

Sar. As the torch in thy grasp.

MYRRHA *fires the pile.*

Myr. 'Tis fired! I come.

[*As MYRRHA springs forward to throw herself
into the flames, the Curtain falls.**

* [In "Sardanapalus" Lord Byron has been far more fortunate than in the "Doge of Venice," inasmuch as his subject is one eminently adapted not only to tragedy in general, but to that peculiar kind of tragedy which Lord Byron is anxious to recommend. The history of the last of the Assyrian kings is at once sufficiently well known to awaken that previous interest which belongs to illustrious names and early associations; and sufficiently remote and obscure to admit of any modification of incident or character which a poet may find convenient. All that we know of Nineveh and its sovereigns is majestic, indis-

tingent, and mysterious. We read of an extensive and civilized monarchy erected in the ages immediately succeeding the deluge, and existing in full might and majesty while the shores of Greece and Italy were unoccupied, except by roving savages. We read of an empire whose influence extended from Samarcand to Troy, and from the mountains of Judah to those of Caucasus, subverted, after a continuance of thirteen hundred years, and a dynasty of thirty generations, in an almost incredibly short space of time, less by the revolt of two provinces than by the anger of Heaven and the predicted fury of natural and inanimate agents. And the influence which both the conquests and the misfortunes of Assyria appear to have exerted over the fates of the people for whom, of all others in ancient history, our strongest feelings are (from religious motives) interested, throws a sort of sacred pomp over the greatness and the crimes of the descendants of Nimrod, and a reverence which no other equally remote portion of profane history is likely to obtain with us. At the same time, all which we know is so brief, so general, and so disjointed, that we have few of those preconceived notions of the persons and facts represented which in classical dramas, if servilely followed, destroy the interest, and if rashly departed from offend the prejudices, of the reader or the auditor. An outline is given of the most majestic kind; but it is an outline only, which the poet may fill up at pleasure; and in ascribing, as Lord Byron has done for the sake of his favorite unities, the destruction of the Assyrian empire to the treason of one night, instead of the war of several years, he has neither shocked our better knowledge, nor incurred any conspicuous improbability. . . . Still, however, the development of Sardanapalus's character is incidental only to the plot of Lord Byron's drama, and though the unities have confined his picture within far narrower limits than he might otherwise have thought advisable, the character is admirably sketched; nor is there any one of the portraits of this great master which gives us a more favorable opinion of his talents, his force of conception, his delicacy and vigor of touch, or the richness and harmony of his coloring. He had, indeed, no unfavorable groundwork, even in the few hints supplied by the ancient historians, as to the

conduct and history of the last and most unfortunate of the line of Belus. Though accused (whether truly or falsely), by his triumphant enemies, of the most revolting vices, and an effeminacy even beyond what might be expected from the last dregs of Asiatic despotism, we find Sardanapalus, when roused by the approach of danger, conducting his armies with a courage, a skill, and, for some time at least, with a success not inferior to those of his most warlike ancestors. We find him retaining to the last the fidelity of his most trusted servants, his nearest kindred, and no small proportion of his hardest subjects. We see him providing for the safety of his wife, his children, and his capital city, with all the calmness and prudence of an experienced captain. We see him at length subdued, not by man, but by Heaven and the elements, and seeking his death with a mixture of heroism and ferocity which little accords with our notions of a weak or utterly degraded character. And even the strange story, variously told, and without further explanation scarcely intelligible, which represents him as building (or fortifying) two cities in a single day, and then deforming his exploits with an indecent image and inscription, would seem to imply a mixture of energy with his folly not impossible, perhaps, to the madness of absolute power, and which may lead us to impute his fall less to weakness than to an injudicious and ostentatious contempt of the opinions and prejudices of mankind. Such a character, — luxurious, energetic, misanthropical, — affords, beyond a doubt, no common advantages to the work of poetic delineation; and it is precisely the character which Lord Byron most delights to draw, and which he has succeeded best in drawing. — HEBER.

I remember Lord Byron's mentioning, that the story of Sardanapalus had been working in his brain for seven years before he commenced it. — TRELAWNEY.]

THE TWO FOSCARI,

AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY.*

The *father* softens, but the *governor's* resolved. — CRITIC.

(157)

* [MS. — “ Begun June the 12th, completed July the 9th, Ravenna, 1821. — *Byron.*]

[“THE Two Foscari” was composed at Ravenna, between the 11th of June and the 10th of July, 1821, and published with “Sardanapalus” in the following December. “The Venetian story,” Byron wrote to Mr. Murray, “is strictly historical. I am much mortified that Gifford do n’t take to my new dramas. To be sure, they are as opposite to the English drama as one thing can be to another; but I have a notion that, if understood, they will, in time, find favor (though *not* on the stage) with the reader. The simplicity of plot is intentional, and the avoidance of *rant* also, as also the compression of the speeches in the more severe situations. What I seek to show in ‘the Foscari’ is the *suppressed* passions, rather than the rant of the present day. For that matter —

‘Nay, if thou’st mouth,
I’ll rant as well as thou —’

would not be difficult, as I think I have shown in my younger productions — *not dramatic* ones, to be sure.” The best English account of the incidents on which this play is founded, is in Smedley’s “Sketches of Venetian History:” —

“The reign of Francesco Foscari had now been prolonged to the unusual period of thirty-four years, and these years were marked by almost continual warfare; during which, however, the courage, the firmness, and the sagacity of the illustrious Doge had won four rich provinces for his country, and increased her glory not less than her dominion. Ardent, enterprising, and ambitious of the glory of conquest, it was not without much opposition that Foscari had obtained the Dogeship; and he soon discovered that the throne which he had coveted with so great earnestness was far from being a seat of repose. Accordingly, at the peace of Ferrara, which in 1433 succeeded a calamitous war, foreseeing the approach of fresh and still greater troubles, and wearied by the factions which ascribed all disasters to the Prince, he tendered his abdication to the senate, and was refused. A like offer was renewed by him when nine years’ further experience of sovereignty had con-

firmed his former estimate of its cares; and the Council, on this second occasion, much more from adherence to existing institutions than from any attachment to the person of the Doge, accompanied their negative with the exaction of an oath that he would retain his burdensome dignity for life. Too early, alas! was he to be taught that life, on such conditions, was the heaviest of curses! Three out of his four sons were already dead: to Giacompo, the survivor, he looked for the continuation of his name and the support of his declining age; and, from that youth's intermarriage with the illustrious house of Contarini, and the popular joy with which his nuptials were celebrated, the Doge drew favorable auspices for future happiness. Four years, however, had scarcely elapsed from the conclusion of that well-omened marriage, when a series of calamities began, from which death alone was to relieve either the son or his yet more wretched father. In 1445, Giacompo Foscari was denounced to the Ten, as having received presents from foreign potentates, and especially from Filippo-Maria Visconti. The offence, according to the law, was one of the most heinous which a noble could commit. Even if Giacompo were guiltless of infringing that law, it was not easy to establish innocence before a Venetian tribunal. Under the eyes of his own father, compelled to preside at the unnatural examination, a confession was extorted from the prisoner, on the rack; and, from the lips of that father, he received the sentence which banished him for life to Napoli di Romania. On his passage, severe illness delayed him at Trieste; and, at the especial prayer of the Doge, a less remote district was assigned for his punishment; he was permitted to reside at Treviso, and his wife was allowed to participate his exile.

It was in the commencement of the winter of 1450, while Giacompo Foscari rested, in comparative tranquillity, within the bounds to which he was restricted, that an assassination occurred in the streets of Venice. Hermolao Donato, a Chief of the Ten, was murdered on his return from a sitting of that council, at his own door, by unknown hands. The magnitude of the offence and the violation of the high dignity of the Ten demanded a victim; and the coadjutors of the slain magistrate caught with eager grasp at the slightest clue which suspicion

could afford. A domestic in the service of Giacopo Foscari had been seen in Venice on the evening of the murder, and on the following morning, when met in a boat off Mestre by a Chief of the Ten, and asked, 'What news?' he had answered by reporting the assassination, several hours before it was generally known. It might seem that such frankness of itself disproved all participation in the crime; for the author of it was not likely thus unseasonably and prematurely to disclose its committal. But the Ten thought differently, and matters which to others bore conviction of innocence, to them savored strongly of guilt. The servant was arrested, examined, and barbarously tortured; but even the eightieth application of the strappado failed to elicit one syllable which might justify condemnation. That Giacopo Foscari had experienced the severity of the Council's judgment, and that its jealous watchfulness was daily imposing some new restraint upon his father's authority, powerfully operated to convince the Ten that they must themselves in return be objects of his deadly enmity. Who else, they said, could be more likely to arm the hand of an assassin against a Chief of the Ten, than one whom the Ten have visited with punishment? On this unjust and unsupported surmise, the young Foscari was recalled from Treviso, placed on the rack which his servant had just vacated, tortured again in his father's presence, and not absolved even after he resolutely persisted in denial unto the end.

The wrongs, however, which Giacopo Foscari endured had by no means chilled the passionate love with which he continued to regard his ungrateful country. He was now excluded from all communication with his family, torn from the wife of his affections, debarred from the society of his children, hopeless of again embracing those parents who had already far outstripped the natural term of human existence; and to his imagination, for ever centering itself on the single desire of return, life presented no other object deserving pursuit; till, for the attainment of this wish, life itself at length appeared to be scarcely more than an adequate sacrifice. Preyed upon by this fever of the heart, after six years' unavailing suit for a remission of punishment, in the summer of 1456, he addressed a letter to the Duke of Milan, imploring his good offices with

the senate. That letter, purposely left open in a place obvious to the spies by whom, even in his exile, he was surrounded, and afterwards intrusted to an equally treacherous hand for delivery to Sforza, was conveyed, as the writer intended, to the Council of Ten; and the result, which equally fulfilled his expectation, was a hasty summons to Venice to answer for the heavy crime of soliciting foreign intercession with his native government.

For a third time, Francesco Foscari listened to the accusation of his son; for the first time he heard him openly avow the charge of his accusers, and calmly state that his offence, such as it was, had been committed designedly and aforethought, with the sole object of detection, in order that he might be brought back, even as a malefactor, to Venice. This prompt and voluntary declaration, however, was not sufficient to decide the nice hesitation of his judges. Guilt, they said, might be too easily admitted as well as too pertinaciously denied; and the same process therefore by which, at other times, confession was wrested from the hardened criminal might now compel a too facile self-accuser to retract his acknowledgment. The father again looked on while his son was raised on the accursed cord no less than thirty times, in order that, under his agony, he might be induced to utter a lying declaration of innocence. But this cruelty was exercised in vain; and, when nature gave way, the sufferer was carried to the apartments of the Doge, torn, bleeding, senseless, and dislocated, but firm in his original purpose. Nor had his persecutors relaxed in *theirs*; they renewed his sentence of exile, and added that its first year should be passed in prison. Before he embarked, one interview was permitted with his family. The Doge, as Sanuto, perhaps unconscious of the pathos of his simplicity, has narrated, was an aged and decrepit man, who walked with the support of a crutch, and when he came into the chamber, he spake with great firmness, so that it might seem it was not his son whom he was addressing, but it *was* his son—his only son. ‘Go, Giacopo,’ was his reply, when prayed for the last time to solicit mercy; ‘Go, Giacopo, submit to the will of your country, and seek nothing further.’ This effort of self-restraint was beyond the powers, not of the old man’s enduring spirit, but of his

exhausted frame; and when he retired, he swooned in the arms of his attendants. Giacompo reached his Candian prison, and was shortly afterwards released by death.

Francesco Foscari, far less happy in his survival, continued to live on, but it was in sorrow and feebleness which prevented attention to the duties of his high office: he remained secluded in his chamber, never went abroad, and absented himself even from the sittings of the councils. No practical inconvenience could result from this want of activity in the chief magistrate; for the constitution sufficiently provided against any accidental suspension of his personal functions, and his place in council, and on state occasions, was supplied by an authorized deputy. Some indulgence, moreover, might be thought due to the extreme age and domestic griefs of Foscari; since they appeared to promise that any favor which might be granted would be claimed but for a short period. But yet further trials were in store. Giacompo Loredano, who in 1467 was appointed one of the Chiefs of the Ten, belonged to a family between which and that of Foscari an hereditary feud had long existed. His uncle Pietro, after gaining high distinction in active service, as Admiral of Venice, on his return to the capital, headed the political faction which opposed the warlike projects of the Doge; divided applause with him by his eloquence in the councils; and so far extended his influence as frequently to obtain majorities in their divisions. In an evil moment of impatience, Foscari once publicly avowed in the senate, that so long as Pietro Loredano lived he should never feel himself really to be Doge. Not long afterwards, the Admiral engaged as Provveditore with one of the armies opposed to Filippo-Maria, died suddenly at a military banquet given during a short suspension of arms; and the evil-omened words of Foscari were connected with his decease. It was remarked, also, that his brother Marco Loredano, one of the Avvogadori, died in a somewhat similar manner, while engaged in instituting a legal process against a son-in-law of the Doge, for peculation upon the state. The foul rumors partially excited by these untoward coincidences, for they appear in truth to have been no more, met with little acceptance, and were rejected or forgotten except by a single bosom. Giacompo, the son of one, the nephew of the other deceased Loredano, gave full credit to the accusation, inscribed

on his father's tomb at Sta. Elena, that he died by poison, bound himself by a solemn vow to the most deadly and unrelenting pursuit of revenge, and fulfilled that vow to the uttermost.

During the lifetime of Pietro Loredano, Foscari, willing to terminate the feud by a domestic alliance, had tendered the hand of his daughter to one of his rival's sons. The youth saw his proffered bride, openly expressed dislike of her person, and rejected her with marked discourtesy; so that, in the quarrel thus heightened, Foscari might now conceive himself to be the most injured party. Not such was the impression of Giacompo Loredano: year after year he grimly awaited the season most fitted for his unbending purpose; and it arrived at length when he found himself in authority among the Ten. Relying upon the ascendancy belonging to that high station, he hazarded a proposal for the deposition of the aged Doge, which was at first, however, received with coldness; for those who had twice before refused a voluntary abdication, shrank from the strange contradiction of now demanding one on compulsion. A junta was required to assist in their deliberations, and among the assessors elected by the Great Council, in complete ignorance of the purpose for which they were needed, was Marco Foscari, a Procuratore of St. Mark, and brother of the Doge himself. The Ten perceived that to reject his assistance might excite suspicion, while to procure his apparent approbation would give a show of impartiality to their process: his nomination, therefore, was accepted, but he was removed to a separate apartment, excluded from the debate, sworn to keep that exclusion secret, and yet compelled to assent to the final decree in the discussion of which he had not been allowed to participate. The council sat during eight days and nearly as many nights; and, at the close of their protracted meetings, a committee was deputed to *request* the abdication of the Doge. The old man received them with surprise, but with composure, and replied that he had sworn not to abdicate, and therefore must maintain his faith. It was not possible that he could resign; but if it appeared fit to their wisdom that he should cease to be Doge, they had it in their power to make a proposal to that effect to the Great Council. It was far, however, from the intention of the Ten to subject themselves to the chances of debate in that larger body;

and, assuming to their own magistracy a prerogative not attributed to it by the constitution, they discharged Foscari from his oath, declared his office vacant, assigned to him a pension of two thousand ducats, and enjoined him to quit the palace within three days, on pain of confiscation of all his property. Loredano, to whom the right belonged, according to the weekly routine of office, enjoyed the barbarous satisfaction of presenting this decree with his own hand. 'Who are you, Signor?' inquired the Doge of another Chief of the Ten who accompanied him, and whose person he did not immediately recognize. 'I am a son of Marco Memmo.' 'Ah, your father,' replied Foscari, 'is my friend.' Then declaring that he yielded willing obedience to the most excellent Council of Ten, and laying aside the ducal bonnet and robes, he surrendered his ring of office, which was broken in his presence. On the morrow, when he prepared to leave the palace, it was suggested to him that he should retire by a private staircase, and thus avoid the concourse assembled in the court-yard below. With calm dignity he refused the proposition: he would descend, he said, by no other than the self-same steps by which he had mounted thirty years before. Accordingly, supported by his brother, he slowly traversed the Giant's Stairs, and, at their foot, leaning on his staff and turning round to the palace, he accompanied his last look to it with these parting words, 'My services established me within your walls; it is the malice of my enemies which tears me from them!'

It was to the Oligarchy alone that Foscari was obnoxious; by the populace he had always been beloved, and strange indeed would it have been had he now failed to excite their sympathy. But even the regrets of the people of Venice were fettered by their tyrants; and whatever pity they might secretly continue to cherish for their wronged and humiliated prince, all expression of it was silenced by a peremptory decree of the Council, forbidding any mention of his name, and annexing death as a penalty to disobedience. On the fifth day after Foscari's deposition, Pascale Malipieri was elected Doge. The dethroned prince heard the announcement of his successor by the bell of the campanile, suppressed his agitation, but ruptured a blood-vessel in the exertion, and died in a few hours."']

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

FRANCIS FOSCARI, *Doge of Venice.*

JACOPO FOSCARI, *Son of the Doge.*

JAMES LOREDANO, *a Patrician.*

MARCO MEMMO, *a Chief of the Forty.*

BARBARIGO, *a Senator.*

*Other Senators, The Council of Ten, Guards,
Attendants, etc. etc.*

WOMAN.

MARINA, *Wife of young FOSCARI.*

Scene — the Ducal Palace, Venice.

THE TWO FOSCARI.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Hall in the Ducal Palace.

*Enter LOREDANO * and BARBARIGO, meeting.*

Lor. WHERE is the prisoner?

Bar.

Reposing from

The Question.

Lor. The hour's past — fixed yesterday
For the resumption of his trial. — Let us

* [The character of Loredano is well conceived and truly tragic. The deep and settled principle of hatred which animates him, and which impels him to the commission of the most atrocious cruelties, may seem, at first, unnatural and overstrained. But not only is it historically true; but, when the cause of that hatred (the supposed murder of his father and uncles), and when the atrocious maxims of Italian revenge, and that habitual contempt of all the milder feelings are taken into consideration which constituted the glory of a Venetian patriot, we may conceive how such a principle might be not only avowed, but exulted in by a Venetian who regarded the house of Foscari as, at once, the enemies of his family and his country. —
HEBER.]

Rejoin our colleagues in the council, and
Urge his recall.

Bar. Nay, let him profit by
A few brief minutes for his tortured limbs ;
He was o'erwrought by the Question yesterday,
And may die under it if now repeated.

Lor. Well?

Bar. I yield not to you in love of justice,
Or hate of the ambitious Foscari,
Father and son, and all their noxious race ;
But the poor wretch has suffered beyond nature's
Most stoical endurance.

Lor. Without owning
His crime?

Bar. Perhaps without committing any.
But he avowed the letter to the Duke
Of Milan, and his sufferings half atone for
Such weakness.

Lor. We shall see.

Bar. You, Loredano,
Pursue hereditary hate too far.

Lor. How far?

Bar. To extermination.

Lor. When they are
Extinct, you may say this. — Let's in to council.

Bar. Yet pause — the number of our colleagues
is not
Complete yet ; two are wanting ere we can
Proceed.

Lor. And the chief judge, the Doge?

Bar. No — he,
With more than Roman fortitude, is ever
First at the board in this unhappy process
Against his last and only son.

Lor. True — true —
His *last*.

Bar. Will nothing move you?

Lor. Feels he, think you?

Bar. He shows it not.

Lor. I have marked *that* — the wretch!

Bar. But yesterday, I hear, on his return
To the ducal chambers, as he passed the threshold
The old man fainted.

Lor. It begins to work, then.

Bar. The work is half your own.

Lor. And should be *all* mine —
My father and my uncle are no more.

Bar. I have read their epitaph, which says they
died

By poison.*

Lor. When the Doge declared that he
Should never deem himself a sovereign till
The death of Peter Loredano, both
The brothers sickened shortly : — he *is* sovereign.

Bar. A wretched one.

Lor. What should they be who make
Orphans?

Bar. But *did* the Doge make you so?

* [“*Veneno sublatu*s.” The tomb is in the church of Santa Elena.]

Lor. Yes.

Bar. What solid proofs?

Lor. When princes set themselves
To work in secret, proofs and process are
Alike made difficult; but I have such
Of the first, as shall make the second needless.

Bar. But you will move by law?

Lor. By all the laws
Which he would leave us.

Bar. They are such in this
Our state as render retribution easier
Than 'mongst remoter nations. Is it true
That you have written in your books of commerce,
(The wealthy practice of our highest nobles)
“Doge Foscari, my debtor for the deaths
Of Marco and Pietro Loredano,
My sire and uncle?”

Lor. It is written thus.

Bar. And will you leave it unerased?

Lor. Till balanced.

Bar. And how?

[*Two Senators pass over the stage, as in their
way to “the Hall of the Council of Ten.”*]

Lor. You see the number is complete.
Follow me. [Exit LOREDANO.

Bar (solus). Follow thee! I have followed long*

* [Loredano is accompanied, upon all emergencies, by a senator called Barbarigo—a sort of confidant or chorus—who comes for no end that we can discover, but to twit him with

Thy path of desolation, as the wave
Sweeps after that before it, alike whelming
The wreck that creaks to the wild winds, and wretch
Who shrieks within its riven ribs, as gush
The waters through them ; but this son and sire
Might move the elements to pause, and yet
Must I on hardily like them — Oh ! would
I could as blindly and remorselessly ! —
Lo, where he comes ! — Be still, my heart ! they are
Thy foes, must be thy victims : wilt thou beat
For those who almost broke thee ?

Enter Guards, with young FOSCARI as prisoner, etc.

Guard.

Let him rest.

Signor, take time.

Jac. Fos. I thank thee, friend, I'm feeble ;
But thou may'st stand reproved.

Guard.

I'll stand the hazard.

Jac. Fos. That's kind : — I meet some pity, but
no mercy ;

This is the first.

Guard.

And might be last, did they
Who rule behold us.

Bar. (advancing to the Guard). There is one who
does :

conscientious cavils and objections, and then to second him by his personal countenance and authority. JEFFREY. — Loredano is the only personage above mediocrity. The remaining characters are all unnatural, or feeble. Barbarigo is as tame and insignificant a confidant, as ever swept after the train of his principal over the Parisian stage. — HEBER.]

Yet fear not; I will neither be thy judge
Nor thy accuser; though the hour is past,
Wait their last summons — I am of “the Ten,”
And waiting for that summons, sanction you
Even by my presence: when the last call sounds,
We’ll in together. — Look well to the prisoner!

Jac. Fos. What voice is that? — ’Tis Barbarigo’s! Ah!

Our house’s foe, and one of my few judges.

Bar. To balance such a foe, if such there be,
Thy father sits amongst thy judges.

Jac. Fos. True,
He judges.

Bar. Then deem not the laws too harsh
Which yield so much indulgence to a sire
As to allow his voice in such high matter
As the state’s safety —

Jac. Fos. And his son’s. I’m faint;
Let me approach, I pray you, for a breath
Of air, yon window which o’erlooks the waters.

Enter an Officer, who whispers BARBARIGO.

Bar. (to the Guard). Let him approach. I must
not speak with him

Further than thus: I have transgressed my duty
In this brief parley, and must now redeem it
Within the Council Chamber. [*Exit BARBARIGO.*
[*Guard conducting JACOPO FOSCARI to the window.*

Guard. There, sir, ’t is
Open — How feel you?

Jac. Fos. Like a boy — Oh Venice!

Guard. And your limbs?

Jac. Fos. Limbs! how often have they borne me
Bounding o'er yon blue tide, as I have skimmed
The gondola along in childish race.
And, masqued as a young gondolier, amidst
My gay competitors, noble as I,
Raced for our pleasure, in the pride of strength;
While the fair populace of crowding beauties,
Plebeian as patrician, cheered us on
With dazzling smiles, and wishes audible,
And waving kerchiefs, and applauding hands,
Even to the goal! — How many a time have I
Cloven with arm still lustier, breast more daring,
The wave all roughened; with a swimmer's stroke
Flinging the billows back from my drenched hair,
And laughing from my lip the audacious brine,
Which kissed it like a wine-cup, rising o'er
The waves as they arose, and prouder still
The loftier they uplifted me; and oft,
In wantonness of spirit, plunging down
Into their green and glassy gulfs, and making
My way to shells and sea-weed, all unseen
By those above, till they waxed fearful; then
Returning with my grasp full of such tokens
As showed that I had searched the deep: exulting,
With a far-dashing stroke, and drawing deep
The long-suspended breath, again I spurned
The foam which broke around me, and pursued
My track like a sea-bird. — I was a boy then.

Guard. Be a man now : there never was more
need
Of manhood's strength.

Jac. Fos. (*looking from the lattice*). My beautiful,
my own,
My only Venice — *this is breath!* Thy breeze,
Thine Adrian sea-breeze, how it fans my face !
Thy very winds feel native to my veins,
And cool them into calmness ! How unlike
The hot gales of the horrid Cyclades,
Which howled about my Candiotte dungeon, and
Made my heart sick.

Guard. I see the color comes
Back to your cheek : Heaven send you strength to
bear
What more may be imposed ! — I dread to think
on't.

Jac. Fos. They will not banish me again ? —
No — no,
Let them wring on ; I am strong yet.

Guard. Confess,
And the rack will be spared you.

Jac. Fos. I confessed
Once — twice before : both times they exiled me.

Guard. And the third time will slay you.

Jac. Fos. Let them do so,
So I be buried in my birth-place : better
Be ashes here than aught that lives elsewhere.

Guard. And can you so much love the soil which
hates you ?

Jac. Fos. The soil!— Oh no, it is the seed of
the soil

Which persecutes me ; but my native earth
Will take me as a mother to her arms.
I ask no more than a Venetian grave,
A dungeon, what they will, so it be here.*

Enter an Officer.

Offi. Bring in the prisoner!

* [And the hero himself, what is he? If there ever existed in nature a case so extraordinary as that of a man who gravely preferred tortures and a dungeon at home, to a temporary residence in a beautiful island and a fine climate, at the distance of three days' sail, it is what few can be made to believe, and still fewer to sympathize with; and which is, therefore, no very promising subject for dramatic representation. For ourselves, we have little doubt that Foscarei wrote the fatal letter with the view, which was imputed to him by his accusers, of obtaining an honorable recall from banishment, through foreign influence; and that the color which, when detected, he endeavored to give to the transaction, was the evasion of a drowning man, who is reduced to catch at straws and shadows. But, if Lord Byron chose to assume this alleged motive of his conduct as the real one, it behooved him, at least, to set before our eyes the intolerable separation from a beloved country, the lingering home-sickness, the gradual alienation of intellect, and the fruitless hope that his enemies had at length relented, which were necessary to produce a conduct so contrary to all usual principles of action as that which again consigned him to the racks and dungeons of his own country. He should have shown him to us, first, taking leave of Venice, a condemned and banished man; next pining in Candia; next tampering with the agents of government; by which time, and not till then, we should have been prepared to listen with patience to his complaints, and to witness his sufferings with interest as well as horror. — HEBER.]

Guard. Signor, you hear the order.

Jac. Fos. Ay, I am used to such a summons ; 'tis
The third time they have tortured me : — then lend me
Thine arm. [*To the Guard.*

Offi. Take mine, sir ; t'is my duty to
Be nearest to your person.

Jac. Fos. You ! — you are he
Who yesterday presided o'er my pangs —
Away ! — I'll walk alone.

Offi. As you please, signor ;
The sentence was not of my signing, but
I dared not disobey the Council when
They —

Jac. Fos. Bade thee stretch me on their horrid
engine.

I pray thee touch me not — that is, just now ;
The time will come they will renew that order,
But keep off from me till 'tis issued. As
I look upon thy hands my curdling limbs
Quiver with the anticipated wrenching,
And the cold drops strain through my brow, as
if —

But onward — I have borne it — I can bear it. —
How looks my father ?

Offi. With his wonted aspect.

Jac. Fos. So does the earth, and sky, the blue of
ocean,

The brightness of our city, and her domes,
The mirth of her Piazza, even now
Its merry hum of nations pierces here,

Even here, into these chambers of the unknown
Who govern, and the unknown and the unnumbered
Judged and destroyed in silence, — all things wear
The self-same aspect, to my very sire!

Nothing can sympathize with Foscari,
Not even a Foscari. — Sir, I attend you.

[*Exeunt* JACOPO FOSCARI, *Officer*, &c.]

Enter MEMMO *and another Senator.*

Mem. He's gone — we are too late: — think you
“the Ten”

Will sit for any length of time to-day?

Sen. They say the prisoner is most obdurate,
Persisting in his first avowal; but
More I know not.

Mem. And that is much; the secrets
Of yon terrific chamber are as hidden
From us, the premier nobles of the state,
As from the people.

Sen. Save the wonted rumors,
Which — like the tales of spectres, that are rife
Near ruined buildings — never have been proved,
Nor wholly disbelieved: men know as little
Of the state's real acts as of the grave's
Unfathomed mysteries.

Mem. But with length of time
We gain a step in knowledge, and I look
Forward to be one day of the decemvirs.

Sen. Or Doge?

Mem. Why, no; not if I can avoid it.

Sen. 'Tis the first station of the state, and may
Be lawfully desired, and lawfully
Attained by noble aspirants.

Mem. To such
I leave it ; though born noble, my ambition
Is limited : I'd rather be an unit
Of an united and imperial "Ten,"
Than shine a lonely, though a gilded cipher. —
Whom have we here ? the wife of Foscari ?

Enter MARINA, with a female Attendant.

Mar. What, no one ? — I am wrong, there still
are two ;
But they are senators.

Mem. Most noble lady,
Command us.

Mar. *I command !* — Alas ! my life
Has been one long entreaty, and a vain one.

Mem. I understand thee, but I must not answer.

Mar. (*fiercely*). True — none dare answer here
save on the rack,
Or question save those —

Mem. (*interrupting her*). High-born dame ! * be-
think thee
Where thou now art.

* [She was a Contarini —

"A daughter of the house that now among
Its ancestors in monumental brass
Numbers eight Doges." — ROGERS.

On the occasion of her marriage with the younger Foscari, the

Mar. Where I now am! — It was
My husband's father's palace.

Mem. The Duke's palace.

Mar. And his son's prison; — true, I have not
forgot it;

And if there were no other nearer, bitterer
Remembrances, would thank the illustrious Memmo
For pointing out the pleasures of the place.

Mem. Be calm!

Mar. (*looking up towards heaven*). I am; but oh,
thou eternal God!

Canst *thou* continue so, with such a world?

Mem. Thy husband yet may be absolved.

Mar. He is,

In heaven. I pray you, signor senator,
Speak not of that; you are a man of office,
So is the Doge; he has a son at stake
Now, at this moment, and I have a husband,
Or had; they are there within, or were at least
An hour since, face to face, as judge and culprit:
Will *he* condemn *him*?

Mem. I trust not.

Mar. But if

He does not, there are those will sentence both.

Mem. They can.

Bucentaur came out in his splendor; and a bridge of boats was
thrown across the Canal Grande for the bridegroom, and his reti-
nue of three hundred horse. According to Sanuto, the tour-
naments in the place of St. Mark lasted three days, and were
attended by thirty thousand people.]

Mar. And with them power and will are one
In wickedness : — my husband's lost !

Mem. Not so ;
Justice is judge in Venice.

Mar. If it were so,
There now would be no Venice. But let it
Live on, so the good die not, till the hour
Of nature's summons ; but "the Ten's" is quicker,
And we must wait on't. Ah ! a voice of wail !
[*A faint cry within.*

Sen. Hark !

Mem. 'T was a cry of —

Mar. No, no ; not my husband's —
Not Foscari's.

Mem. The voice was —

Mar. Not his : no.
He shriek ! No ; that should be his father's part,
Not his — not his — he'll die in silence.

[*A faint groan again within.*

Mem. What !
Again ?

Mar. His voice ! it seemed so : I will not
Believe it. Should he shrink, I cannot cease
To love ; but — no — no — no — it must have been
A fearful pang, which wrung a groan from him.

Sen. And, feeling for thy husband's wrongs,
wouldst thou
Have him bear more than mortal pain, in silence ?

Mar. We all must bear our tortures. I have not
Left barren the great house of Foscari,

Though they sweep both the Doge and son from life;
I have endured as much in giving life
To those who will succeed them, as they can
In leaving it: but mine were joyful pangs:
And yet they wrung me till I *could* have shrieked,
But did not; for my hope was to bring forth
Heroes, and would not welcome them with tears.

Mem. All's silent now.

Mar. Perhaps all's over; but
I will not deem it: he hath nerved himself,
And now defies them.

Enter an Officer hastily.

Mem. How now, friend, what seek you?

Offi. A leech. The prisoner has fainted.

[*Exit Officer.*

Mem. Lady,

'T were better to retire.

Sen. (*offering to assist her*). I pray thee do so.

Mar. Off! I will tend him.

Mem. You! Remember, lady!
Ingress is given to none within those chambers,
Except "the Ten," and their familiars.

Mar. Well,
I know that none who enter there return
As they have entered — many never; but
They shall not balk my entrance.

Mem. Alas! this
Is but to expose yourself to harsh repulse,
And worse suspense.

Mar. Who shall oppose me?

Mem. They

Whose duty 'tis to do so.

Mar. 'Tis *their* duty
To trample on all human feelings, all
Ties which bind man to man, to emulate
The fiends who will one day requite them in
Variety of torturing! Yet I'll pass.

Mem. It is impossible.

Mar. That shall be tried.

Despair defies even despotism: there is
That in my heart would make its way through hosts
With levelled spears; and think you a few jailors,
Shall put me from my path? Give me, then, way;
This is the Doge's palace; I am wife
Of the Duke's son, the *innocent* Duke's son,
And they shall hear this!

Mem. It will only serve
More to exasperate his judges.

Mar. What
Are *judges* who give way to anger? they
Who do so are assassins. Give me way.

[*Exit* MARINA.]

Sen. Poor lady!

Mem. 'Tis mere desperation: she
Will not be admitted o'er the threshold.

Sen. And
Even if she be so, cannot save her husband.
But, see, the officer returns.

[*The Officer passes over the stage with another person*

Mem. I hardly
Thought that "the Ten" had even this touch of
pity,
Or would permit assistance to this sufferer.

Sen. Pity! Is't pity to recall to feeling
The wretch too happy to escape to death
By the compassionate trance, poor nature's last
Resource against the tyranny of pain?

Mem. I marvel they condemn him not at once.

Sen. That's not their policy: they'd have him
live,
Because he fears not death; and banish him,
Because all earth, except his native land,
To him is one wide prison, and each breath
Of foreign air he draws seems a slow poison,
Consuming but not killing.

Mem. Circumstance
Confirms his crimes, but he avows them not.

Sen. None, save the Letter, which he says was
written,
Addressed to Milan's duke, in the full knowledge
That it would fall into the senate's hands,
And thus he should be reconveyed to Venice.

Mem. But as a culprit.

Sen. Yes, but to his country
And that was all he sought, — so he avouches.

Mem. The accusation of the bribes was proved.

Sen. Not clearly, and the charge of homicide
Has been annulled by the death-bed confession

Of Nicolas Erizzo, who slew the late
Chief of "the Ten." *

Mem. Then why not clear him?

Sen. That

They ought to answer; for it is well known
That Almoro Donato, as I said,
Was slain by Erizzo for private vengeance.

Mem. There must be more in this strange pro-
cess than

The apparent crimes of the accused disclose —
But here come two of "the Ten;" let us retire.

[*Exeunt MEMMO and Senator.*]

Enter LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.

Bar. (*addressing LOR.*) That were too much:
believe me, 't was not meet

The trial should go further at this moment.

* [The extraordinary sentence pronounced against him, still existing among the archives of Venice, runs thus: — "Giacopo Foscari, accused of the murder of Hermolao Donato, has been arrested and examined; and, from the testimony, evidence, and documents exhibited, *it distinctly appears* that he is guilty of the aforesaid crime; nevertheless, on account of his obstinacy, and of *enchantments and spells*, in his possession, of which there are manifest proofs, it has not been possible to extract from him the truth, which is clear from parol and written evidence; for, while he was on the cord, he uttered neither word nor groan, but only murmured something to himself indistinctly and under his breath; therefore *as the honor of the state requires*, he is condemned to a more distant banishment in Candia." Will it be credited, that a distinct proof of his innocence, obtained by the discovery of the real assassin, wrought no change in his unjust and cruel sentence? " — SMEDLEY.]

Lor. And so the Council must break up, and
Justice
Pause in her full career, because a woman
Breaks in on our deliberations?

Bar. No,
That's not the cause; you saw the prisoner's state.

Lor. And had he not recovered?

Bar. To relapse
Upon the least renewal.

Lor. 'T was not tried.

Bar. 'Tis vain to murmur; the majority
In council were against you.

Lor. Thanks to you, sir,
And the old ducal dotard, who combined
The worthy voices which o'er-ruled my own.

Bar. I am a judge; but must confess that part
Of our stern duty, which prescribes the Question,
And bids us sit and see its sharp infliction,
Makes me wish ——

Lor. What?

Bar. That *you* would *sometimes* feel.
As I do always.

Lor. Go to, you're a child,
Infirm of feeling as of purpose, blown
About by every breath, shook by a sigh,
And melted by a tear — a precious judge
For Venice! and a worthy statesman to
Be partner in my policy.

Bar. He shed
No tears.

Lor. He cried out twice.

Bar. A saint had done so,
Even with the crown of glory in his eye,
At such inhuman artifice of pain
As was forced on him; but he did not cry
For pity; not a word nor groan escaped him,
And those two shrieks were not in supplication,
But wrung from pangs, and followed by no prayers.

Lor. He muttered many times between his teeth,
But inarticulately.

Bar. That I heard not;
You stood more near him.

Lor. I did so.

Bar. Methought,
To my surprise too, you were touched with mercy,
And were the first to call out for assistance
When he was failing.

Lor. I believed that swoon
His last.

Bar. And have I not oft heard thee name
His and his father's death your nearest wish?

Lor. If he dies innocent, that is to say,
With his guilt unavowed, he'll be lamented.

Bar. What, wouldst thou slay his memory?

Lor. Wouldst thou have
His state descend to his children, as it must,
If he die unattainted?

Bar. War with *them* too?

Lor. With all their house, till theirs or mine are
nothing.

Bar. And the deep agony of his pale wife,
And the repressed convulsion of the high
And princely brow of his old father, which
Broke forth in a slight shuddering, though rarely,
Or in some clammy drops, soon wiped away
In stern serenity ; these moved you not ?

[*Exit* LOREDANO.

He's silent in his hate, as Foscari
Was in his suffering ; and the poor wretch moved me
More by his silence than a thousand outcries
Could have effected. 'Twas a dreadful sight
When his distracted wife broke through into
The hall of our tribunal, and beheld
What we could scarcely look upon, long used
To such sights. I must think no more of this,
Lest I forget in this compassion for
Our foes their former injuries, and lose
The hold of vengeance Loredano plans
For him and me ; but mine would be content
With lesser retribution than he thirsts for,
And I would mitigate his deeper hatred
To milder thoughts ; but for the present, Foscari
Has a short hourly respite, granted at
The instance of the elders of the Council,
Moved doubtless by his wife's appearance in
The hall, and his own sufferings. — Lo ! they come :
How feeble and forlorn ! I cannot bear
To look on them again in this extremity :
I'll hence, and try to soften Loredano.

Exit BARBARIGO.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Hall in the DOGE's Palace.

The DOGE and a SENATOR.

Sen. Is it your pleasure to sign the report
Now, or postpone it till to-morrow?

Doge. Now;
I overlooked it yesterday: it wants
Merely the signature. Give me the pen —
[*The DOGE sits down and signs the paper.*
There, signor.

Sen. (*looking at the paper*). You have forgot; it is
not signed.

Doge. Not signed? Ah, I perceive my eyes begin
To wax more weak with age. I did not see
That I had dipped the pen without effect.*

Sen. (*dipping the pen into the ink, and placing the
paper before the DOGE*). Your hand, too,
shakes, my lord: allow me, thus —

Doge. 'Tis done, I thank you.

Sen. Thus the act confirmed
By you and by "the Ten" gives peace to Venice.

Doge. 'Tis long since she enjoyed it: may it be
As long ere she resume her arms!

* [MS. — "That I had dipped the pen too heedlessly."]

Sen. 'Tis almost
Thirty-four years of nearly ceaseless warfare
With the Turk, or the powers of Italy ;
The state had need of some repose.

Doge. No doubt :
I found her Queen of Ocean, and I leave her
Lady of Lombardy ; * it is a comfort
That I have added to her diadem
The gems of Brescia and Ravenna ; Crema
And Bergamo no less are hers ; her realm
By land has grown by thus much in my reign,
While her sea-sway has not shrunk.

Sen. 'Tis most true,
And merits all our country's gratitude.

Doge. Perhaps so.

Sen. Which should be made manifest.

Doge. I have not complained, sir.

Sen. My good lord, forgive me.

Doge. For what ?

Sen. My heart bleeds for you.

Doge. For me, signor ?

Sen. And for your ——

Doge. Stop !

Sen. It must have way, my lord ;
I have too many duties towards you
And all your house, for past and present kindness,
Not to feel deeply for your son.

Doge. Was this
In your commission ?

* [MS. — "Mistress of Lombardy — it is some comfort."]

Sen. What, my lord?

Doge. This prattle
Of things you know not: but the treaty's signed;
Return with it to them who sent you.

Sen. I
Obey. I had in charge, too, from the Council
That you would fix an hour for their reunion.

Doge. Say, when they will — now, even at this
moment,
If it so please them: I am the state's servant.

Sen. They would accord some time for your
repose.

Doge. I have no repose, that is, none which shall
cause
The loss of an hour's time unto the state.
Let them meet when they will, I shall be found
Where I should be, and *what* I have been ever.

[*Exit* SENATOR.]

[*The DOGE remains in silence.*]

Enter an Attendant.

Att. Prince!

Doge. Say on.

Att. The illustrious lady Foscari
Requests an audience.

Doge. Bid her enter. Poor
Marina! [*Exit Attendant.*]

[*The DOGE remains in silence as before.*]

Enter MARINA.

Mar. I have ventured, father, on
Your privacy.

Doge. I have none from you, my child.
Command my time, when not commanded by
The state.

Mar. I wished to speak to you of *him*.

Doge. Your husband?

Mar. And your son.

Doge. Proceed, my daughter!

Mar. I had obtained permission from "the Ten"
To attend my husband for a limited number
Of hours.

Doge. You had so.

Mar. 'Tis revoked.

Doge. By whom?

Mar. "The Ten." — When we had reached "the
Bridge of Sighs,"

Which I prepared to pass with Foscari,
The gloomy guardian of that passage first
Demurred: a messenger was sent back to
"The Ten;" but as the court no longer sate,
And no permission had been given in writing,
I was thrust back, with the assurance that
Until that high tribunal re-assembled
The dungeon walls must still divide us.

Doge. True,
The form has been omitted in the haste
With which the court adjourned; and till it meets,
'Tis dubious.

Mar. Till it meets! and when it meets,
They'll torture him again; and he and *I*
Must purchase by renewal of the rack
The interview of husband and of wife,
The holiest tie beneath the heavens! — Oh God!
Dost thou see this?

Doge. Child — child —

Mar. (abruptly). Call *me* not “child!”
You soon will have no children — you deserve
none —

You, who can talk thus calmly of a son
In circumstances which would call forth tears
Of blood from Spartans! Though these did not
weep

Their boys who died in battle, is it written
That they beheld them perish piecemeal, nor
Stretched forth a hand to save them?

Doge. You behold me:
I cannot weep — I would I could; but if
Each white hair on this head were a young life,
This ducal cap the diadem of earth,
This ducal ring with which I wed the waves
A talisman to still them — I'd give all
For him.

Mar. With less he surely might be saved.

Doge. That answer only shows you know not
Venice.

Alas! how should you? she knows not herself,
In all her mystery. Hear me — they who aim
At Foscari, aim no less at his father;

The sire's destruction would not save the son ;
They work by different means to the same end,
And that is —— but they have not conquered yet.

Mar. But they have crushed.

Doge. Nor crushed as yet — I live.

Mar. And your son, — how long will he live?

Doge. I trust,

For all that yet is past, as many years
And happier than his father. The rash boy,
With womanish impatience to return,
Hath ruined all by that detected letter :
A high crime, which I neither can deny
Nor palliate, as parent or as Duke :
Had he but borne a little, little longer
His Candiote exile, I had hopes —— he has quenched
them —

He must return.

Mar. To exile?

Doge. I have said it.

Mar. And can I not go with him?

Doge. You well know

This prayer of yours was twice denied before
By the assembled "Ten," and hardly now
Will be accorded to a third request,
Since aggravated errors on the part
Of your lord renders them still more austere.

Mar. Austere? Atrocious! The old human fiends,
With one foot in the grave, with dim eyes, strange
To tears save drops of dotage, with long white
And scanty hairs, and shaking hands, and heads

As palsied as their hearts are hard, they council,
Cabal, and put men's lives out, as if life
Were no more than the feelings long extinguished
In their accursed bosoms.

Doge. You know not ——

Mar. I do — I do — and so should you, me-
thinks —

That these are demons: could it be else that
Men, who have been of women born and suckled —
Who have loved, or talked at least of love — have
given [babes
Their hands in sacred vows — have danced their
Upon their knees, perhaps have mourned above
them —

In pain, in peril, or in death — who are,
Or were at least in seeming, human, could
Do as they have done by yours, and you yourself,
You, who abet them?

Doge. I forgive this, for
You know not what you say.

Mar. You know it well,
And feel it nothing.

Doge. I have borne so much,
That words have ceased to shake me.

Mar. Oh, no doubt!
You have seen your son's blood flow, and your flesh
shook not:
And after that, what are a woman's words?
No more than woman's tears, that they should shake
you.

Doge. Woman, this clamorous grief of thine, I
tell thee,
Is no more in the balance weighed with that
Which —— but I pity thee, my poor Marina!

Mar. Pity my husband, or I cast it from me;
Pity thy son! *Thou* pity! — 'tis a word
Strange to thy heart — how came it on thy lips?

Doge. I must bear these reproaches, though they
wrong me.
Couldst thou but read ——

Mar. 'Tis not upon thy brow,
Nor in thine eyes, nor in thine acts, — where then
Should I behold this sympathy? or shall?

Doge (*pointing downwards*). There

Mar. In the earth?

Doge. To which I am tending: when
It lies upon this heart, far lightlier, though
Loaded with marble, than the thoughts which press it
Now, you will know me better.

Mar. Are you, then,
Indeed, thus to be pitied?

Doge. Pitied! None
Shall ever use that base word, with which men
Cloak their soul's hoarded triumph, as a fit one
To mingle with my name; that name shall be,
As far as *I* have borne it, what it was
When I received it.

Mar. But for the poor children
Of him thou canst not, or thou wilt not save,
You were the last to bear it.

Doge. Would it were so !
Better for him he never had been born ;
Better for me. — I have seen our house dishonored.

Mar. That's false ! A truer, nobler, trustier heart,
More loving, or more loyal, never beat
Within a human breast. I would not change
My exiled, persecuted, mangled husband,
Oppressed but not disgraced, crushed, overwhelmed,
Alive, or dead, for prince or paladin
In story or in fable, with a world
To back his suit. Dishonored ! — *he* dishonored !
I tell thee, Doge, 't is Venice is dishonored ;
His name shall be her foulest, worst reproach,
For what he suffers, not for what he did.
'T is ye who are all traitors, tyrant ! — ye !
Did you but love your country like this victim
Who totters back in chains to tortures, and
Submits to all things rather than to exile,
You 'd fling yourselves before him, and implore
His grace for your enormous guilt.

Doge. He was
Indeed all you have said. I better bore
The deaths of the two sons Heaven took from me,
Than Jacopo's disgrace.

Mar. That word again ?

Doge. Has he not been condemned ?

Mar. Is none but guilt so ?

Doge. Time may restore his memory — I would
hope so.

He was my pride, my —— but 't is useless now ---

I am not given to tears, but wept for joy
When he was born : those drops were ominous.

Mar. I say he 's innocent ! And were he not so,
Is our own blood and kin to shrink from us
In fatal moments ?

Doge. I shrank not from him :
But I have other duties than a father's ;
The state would not dispense me from those duties ;
Twice I demanded it, but was refused :
They must then be fulfilled.*

Enter an Attendant.

Att. A message from
"The Ten."

Doge. Who bears it ?

Att. Noble Loredano.

* [The interest of this play is founded upon feelings so peculiar or overstrained, as to engage no sympathy ; and the whole story turns on incidents that are neither pleasing nor natural. The younger Foscari undergoes the rack twice (once in the hearing of the audience), merely because he has chosen to feign himself a traitor, that he might be brought back from undeserved banishment, and dies at last of pure dotage on this sentiment ; while the elder Foscari submits, in profound and immovable silence, to this treatment of his son, lest, by seeming to feel for his unhappy fate, he should be implicated in his guilt — though he is supposed guiltless. He, the Doge, is afraid to stir hand or foot, to look or speak, while these inexplicable horrors are transacting, on account of the hostility of one Loredano, who lords it in the council of "the Ten," nobody knows why or how ; and who at last "enmeshes" both father and son in his toils, in spite of their passive obedience and non-resistance to his plans. They are silly flies for this spider to catch, and "feed fat his ancient grudge upon." — JEFFREY.]

Doge. He! — but admit him. [*Exit Attendant.*

Mar. Must I then retire?

Doge. Perhaps it is not requisite, if this
Concerns your husband, and if not — Well, signor,
Your pleasure! [*To LOREDANO entering.*

Lor. I bear that of “the Ten.”

Doge. They
Have chosen well their envoy.

Lor. 'Tis *their* choice
Which leads me here.

Doge. It does their wisdom honor,
And no less to their courtesy. — Proceed.

Lor. We have decided.

Doge. We?

Lor. “The Ten” in council.

Doge. What! have they met again, and met
without
Apprising me?

Lor. They wished to spare your feelings,
No less than age.

Doge. That's new — when spared they either?
I thank them, notwithstanding.

Lor. You know well
That they have power to act at their discretion,
With or without the presence of the Doge.

Doge. 'Tis some years since I learned this, long
before
I became Doge, or dreamed of such advancement.
You need not school me, signor; I sate in
That council when you were a young patrician.

Lor. True, in my father's time ; I have heard him
and
The admiral, his brother, say as much.
Your highness may remember them ; they both
Died suddenly.

Doge. And if they did so, better
So die than live on lingeringly in pain.

Lor. No doubt ; yet most men like to live their
day's out.

Doge. And did not they ?

Lor. The grave knows best : they died,
As I said, suddenly.

Doge. Is that so strange,
That you repeat the word emphatically ?

Lor. So far from strange, that never was there
death
In my mind half so natural as theirs.
Think *you* not so ?

Doge. What should I think of mortals ?

Lor. That they have mortal foes.

Doge. I understand you ;
Your sires were mine, and you are heir in all things.

Lor. You best know if I should be so.

Doge. I do.
Your fathers were my foes, and I have heard
Foul rumors were abroad ; I have also read
Their epitaph, attributing their deaths
To poison. 'Tis perhaps as true as most
Inscriptions upon tombs, and yet no less
A fable.

Lor. Who dares say so?

Doge. I! — 'Tis true
Your fathers were mine enemies, as bitter
As their son e'er can be, and I no less
Was theirs; but I was *openly* their foe:
I never worked by plot in council, nor
Cabal in commonwealth, nor secret means
Of practice against life by steel or drug.
The proof is, your existence.

Lor. I fear not.

Doge. You have no cause, being what I am; but
were I
That you would have me thought, you long ere now
Were past the sense of fear. Hate on; I care not.

Lor. I never yet knew that a noble's life
In Venice had to dread a Doge's frown,
That is, by open means.

Doge. But I, good signor
Am, or at least *was*, more than a mere duke,
In blood, in mind, in means; and that they know
Who dreaded to elect me, and have since
Striven all they dare to weigh me down: be sure.
Before or since that period, had I held you
At so much price as to require your absence,
A word of mine had set such spirits to work
As would have made you nothing. But in all things
I have observed the strictest reverence;
Not for the laws alone, for those *you* have strained
(I do not speak of *you* but as a single
Voice of the many) somewhat beyond what

I could enforce for my authority,
Were I disposed to brawl; but, as I said,
I have observed with veneration, like
A priest's for the high altar, even unto
The sacrifice of my own blood and quiet,
Safety, and all save honor, the decrees,
The health, the pride, and welfare of the state.
And now, sir, to your business.

Lor. 'Tis decreed,
That, without further repetition of
The Question, or continuance of the trial,
Which only tends to show how stubborn guilt is,
("The Ten," dispensing with the stricter law
Which still prescribes the Question and a full
Confession, and the prisoner partly having
Avowed his crime in not denying that
The letter to the Duke of Milan's his),
James Foscari return to banishment,
And sail in the same galley which conveyed him.

Mar. Thank God! At least they will not drag
him more
Before that horrible tribunal. Would he
But think so, to my mind the happiest doom,
Not he alone, but all who dwell here, could
Desire, were to escape from such a land.

Doge. That is not a Venetian thought, my
daughter.

Mar. No, 'twas too human. May I share his
exile?

Lor. Of this "the Ten" said nothing.

Mar. So I thought:
That were too human, also. But it was not
Inhibited?

Lor. It was not named.

Mar. (*to the Doge*). Then, father,
Surely you can obtain or grant me thus much:
[*To LOREDANO.*

And you, sir, not oppose my prayer to be
Permitted to accompany my husband.

Doge. I will endeavor.

Mar. And you, signor?

Lor. Lady!

'Tis not for me to anticipate the pleasure
Of the tribunal.

Mar. Pleasure! what a word
To use for the decrees of ——

Doge. Daughter, know you
In what a presence you pronounce these things?

Mar. A prince's and his subject's.

Lor. Subject!

Mar. Oh!

It galls you: — well, you are his equal, as
You think; but that you are not, nor would be,
Were he a peasant: — well, then, you're a prince.
A princely noble; and what then am I?

Lor. The offspring of a noble house.

Mar. And wedded
To one as noble. What, or whose, then, is
The presence that should silence my free thoughts?

Lor. The presence of your husband's judges.

Doge. And
The deference due even to the lightest word
That falls from those who rule in Venice.

Mar. Keep
Those maxims for your mass of scared mechanics,
Your merchants, your Dalmatian and Greek slaves,
Your tributaries, your dumb citizens,
And masked nobility, your sbirri, and
Your spies, your galley and your other slaves,
To whom your midnight carryings off and drown-
ings,
Your dungeons next the palace roofs, or under
The water's level ; your mysterious meetings,
And unknown dooms, and sudden executions, [and
Your "Bridge of Sighs," * your strangling chamber,
Your torturing instruments, have made ye seem
The beings of another and worse world !
Keep such for them : I fear ye not. I know ye ;
Have known and proved your worst, in the infernal
Process of my poor husband ! Treat me as
Ye treated him : — you did so, in so dealing
With him. Then what have I to fear *from* you,
Even if I were of fearful nature, which
I trust I am not ?

Doge. You hear, she speaks wildly.

Mar. Not wisely, yet not wildly.

Lor. Lady ! words
Uttered within these walls I bear no further

* [See *antè*, Vol. VI. p. 130.]

Than to the threshold, saving such as pass
Between the Duke and me on the state's service.
Doge! have you aught in answer?

Doge. Something from
The Doge; it may be also from a parent.

Lor. My Mission *here* is to the *Doge*.

Doge. Then say
The Doge will choose his own ambassador,
Or state in person what is meet; and for
The father ——

Lor. I remember *mine*. — Farewell!
I kiss the hands of the illustrious lady,
And bow me to the Duke. [*Exit LOREDANO.*

Mar. Are you content?

Doge. I am what you behold.

Mar. And that's a mystery.

Doge. All things are so to mortals; who can read
them

Save he who made? or, if they can, the few
And gifted spirits, who have studied long
That loathsome volume — man, and pored upon
Those black and bloody leaves, his heart and brain.*
But learn a magic which recoils upon
The adept who pursues it: all the sins
We find in others, nature made our own;
All our advantages are those of fortune;
Birth, wealth, health, beauty, are her accidents,
And when we cry out against Fate 't were well

* [MS. — “The blackest leaf, his heart, and blankest his
brain.”]

We should remember Fortune can take nought
 Save what she *gave* — the rest was nakedness,
 And lusts, and appetites, and vanities,
 The universal heritage, to battle
 With as we may, and least in humblest stations,
 Where hunger swallows all in one low want,*
 And the original ordinance, that man
 Must sweat for his poor pittance, keeps all passions
 Aloof, save fear of famine ! All is low,
 And false, and hollow — clay from first to last,
 The prince's urn no less than potter's vessel.
 Our fame is in men's breath, our lives upon
 Less than their breath ; our durance upon days,
 Our days on seasons ; our whole being on
 Something which is not *us* ! — So, we are slaves,
 The greatest as the meanest — nothing rests
 Upon our will ; the will itself no less
 Depends upon a straw than on a storm ; †
 And when we think we lead, we are most led,
 And still towards death, a thing which comes as
 much
 Without our act or choice as birth, so that
 Methinks we must have sinned in some old world,
 And *this* is hell : the best is, that it is not
 Eternal.

* [MS.— “ Where hunger swallows all — where ever was
 The monarch who could bear a three days' fast ? ”]

† [MS.— “ the will itself dependent
 Upon a storm, a straw, and both alike
 Leading to death. ”]

Mar. These are things we cannot judge
On earth.

Doge. And how then shall we judge each other,
Who are all earth, and I, who am called upon
To judge my son? I have administered
My country faithfully — victoriously —
I dare them to the proof, the *chart* of what
She was and is: my reign has doubled realms;
And, in reward, the gratitude of Venice
Has left, or is about to leave, *me* single.

Mar. And Foscari? I do not think of such things,
So I be left with him.

Doge. You shall be so;
Thus much they cannot well deny.

Mar. And if
They should, I will fly with him.

Doge. That can ne'er be.
And whither would you fly?

Mar. I know not, reck not —
To Syria, Egypt, to the Ottoman —
Any where, where we might respire unfettered,
And live nor girt by spies, nor liable
To edicts of inquisitors of state.

Doge. What, wouldst thou have a renegade for
husband,
And turn him into traitor?

Mar. He is none!
The country is the traitress, which thrusts forth
Her best and bravest from her. Tyranny
Is far the worst of treasons. Dost thou deem

None rebels except subjects? The prince who
Neglects or violates his trust is more
A brigand than the robber-chief.

Doge. I cannot
Charge me with such a breach of faith.

Mar. No; thou
Observ'st, obey'st, such laws as make old Draco's
A code of mercy by comparison.

Doge. I found the law; I did not make it. Were I
A subject, still I might find parts and portions
Fit for amendment; but as prince, I never
Would change, for the sake of my house, the charter
Left by our fathers.

Mar. Did they make it for
The ruin of their children?

Doge. Under such laws, Venice
Has risen to what she is — a state to rival
In deeds, and days, and sway, and, let me add,
In glory (for we have had Roman spirits
Amongst us), all that history has bequeathed
Of Rome and Carthage in their best times, when
The people swayed by senates.

Mar. Rather say,
Groaned under the stern oligarchs.

Doge. Perhaps so;
But yet subdued the world: in such a state
An individual, be he richest of
Such rank as is permitted, or the meanest,
Without a name, is alike nothing, when
The policy, irrevocably tending
To one great end, must be maintained in vigor.

Mar. This means that you are more a Doge than father.

Doge. It means, I am more citizen than either.
If we had not for many centuries
Had thousands of such citizens, and shall,
I trust, have still such, Venice were no city.

Mar. Accursed be the city where the laws
Would stifle nature's!

Doge. Had I as many sons
As I have years, I would have given them all,
Not without feeling, but I would have given them
To the state's service, to fulfil her wishes
On the flood, in the field, or, if it must be,
As it, alas! has been, to ostracism,
Exile, or chains, or whatsoever worse
She might decree.

Mar. And this is patriotism?
To me it seems the worst barbarity.
Let me seek out my husband: the sage "Ten,"
With all its jealousy, will hardly war
So far with a weak woman as deny me
A moment's access to his dungeon.

Doge. I'll
So far take on myself, as order that
You may be admitted.

Mar. And what shall I say
To Foscari from his father!

Doge. That he obey
The laws.

Mar. And nothing more? Will you not see him
Ere he depart? It may be the last time.

Doge. The last! — my boy! — the last time I
shall see
My last of children! Tell him I will come.
[*Exeunt.*

A C T I I I.

SCENE I.

The Prison of JACOPO FOSCARI.

Jac. Fos. (solus). No light, save yon faint gleam
which shows me walls
Which never echoed but to sorrow's sounds,
The sigh of long imprisonment, the step
Of feet on which the iron clanked, the groan
Of death, the imprecation of despair!
And yet for this I have returned to Venice,
With some faint hope, 'tis true, that time, which
wears
The marble down, had worn away the hate
Of men's hearts; but I knew them not, and here
Must I consume my own, which never beat
For Venice but with such a yearning as
The dove has for her distant nest, when wheeling
High in the air on her return to greet
Her callow brood. What letters are these which
[*Approaching the wall.*
Are scrawled along the inexorable wall?
Will the gleam let me trace them? Ah! the names

Of my sad predecessors in this place,
The dates of their despair, the brief words of
A grief too great for many. This stone page
Holds like an epitaph their history ;
And the poor captive's tale is graven on
His dungeon barrier, like the lover's record
Upon the bark of some tall tree, which bears
His own and his beloved's name. Alas,
I recognize some names familiar to me,
And blighted like to mine, which I will add,
Fittest for such a chronicle as this,
Which only can be read, as writ, by wretches.*

[*He engraves his name.*]

Enter a Familiar of "the Ten." †

Fam. I bring you food.

Jac. Fos. I pray you set it down ;
I am past hunger : but my lips are parched —
The water !

Fam. There.

* [MS. — "Which never can be read but, as 't was written,
By wretched beings."]

† [Lord Byron, in this tragedy, has not ventured upon further deviation from historical truth than is fully authorized by the license of the drama. We may remark, however, that after Giacopo had been tortured, he was removed to the Ducal apartments, not to one of the *Pozzi* ; that his death occurred, not at Venice, but at Canea ; that fifteen months elapsed between his last condemnation and his father's deposition ; and that the death of the Doge took place, not at the palace, but in his own house. — SMEDLEY.]

Jac. Fos. (*after drinking*). I thank you : I am better.

Fam. I am commanded to inform you that Your further trial is postponed.

Jac. Fos. Till when ?

Fam. I know not. — It is also in my orders That your illustrious lady be admitted.

Jac. Fos. Ah ! they relent, then — I had ceased to hope it :

'T was time.

Enter MARINA.

Mar. My best beloved !

Jac. Fos. (*embracing her*). My true wife,
And only friend ! What happiness !

Mar. We'll part
No more.

Jac. Fos. How ! wouldst thou share a dungeon ?

Mar. Ay,
The rack, the grave, all — any thing with thee,
But the tomb last of all, for there we shall
Be ignorant of each other, yet I will
Share that — all things except new separation ;
It is too much to have survived the first.

How dost thou ? How are those worn limbs ? Alas !
Why do I ask ? Thy paleness —

Jac. Fos. 'T is the joy
Of seeing thee again so soon, and so
Without expectancy, has sent the blood
Back to my heart, and left my cheeks like thine.
For thou art pale too, my Marina !

Mar. 'Tis
The gloom of this eternal cell, which never
Knew sunbeam, and the sallow sullen glare
Of the familiar's torch, which seems akin *
To darkness more than light, by lending to
The dungeon vapors its bituminous smoke,
Which cloud whate'er we gaze on, even thine eyes —
No, not thine eyes — they sparkle — how they
sparkle !

Jac. Fos. And thine ! — but I am blinded by the
torch.

Mar. As I had been without it. Couldst thou see
here ?

Jac. Fos. Nothing at first ; but use and time had
taught me

Familiarity with what was darkness ;
And the grey twilight of such glimmerings as
Glide through the crevices made by the winds
Was kinder to mine eyes than the full sun,
When gorgeously o'ergilding any towers
Save those of Venice ; but a moment ere
Thou camest hither I was busy writing.

Mar. What ?

Jac. Fos. My name : look, 't is there — recorded
next

The name of him who here preceded me,
If dungeon dates say true.

Mar. And what of him ?

* [MS. — "Of the familiar's torch, which seems to love
Darkness far more than light."]

Jac. Fos. These walls are silent of men's ends ;
they only
Seem to hint shrewdly of them. Such stern walls
Were never piled on high save o'er the dead,
Or those who soon must be so. — *What of him?*
Thou askest. — What of me? may soon be asked,
With the like answer — doubt and dreadful sur-
mise —
Unless thou tell'st my tale.

Mar. *I speak of thee!*

Jac. Fos. And wherefore not? All then shall
speak of me:

The tyranny of silence is not lasting,
And, though events be hidden, just men's groans
Will burst all cerement, even a living grave's!
I do not *doubt* my memory, but my life;
And neither do I fear.

Mar. Thy life is safe.

Jac. Fos. And liberty?

Mar. The mind should make its own.

Jac. Fos. That has a noble sound; but 'tis a
sound,

A music most impressive, but too transient:
The mind is much, but is not all. The mind
Hath nerved me to endure the risk of death,
And torture positive, far worse than death
(If death be a deep sleep), without a groan,
Or with a cry which rather shamed my judges
Than me; but 'tis not all, for there are things
More woful — such as this small dungeon, where
I may breathe many years.

Mar. Alas! and this
Small dungeon is all that belongs to thee
Of this wide realm, of which thy sire is prince.

Jac. Fos. That thought would scarcely aid me to
endure it.

My doom is common, many are in dungeons,
But none like mine, so near their father's palace;
But then my heart is sometimes high, and hope
Will stream along those moted rays of light
Peopled with dusty atoms, which afford
Our only day; for, save the gaoler's torch,
And a strange firefly, which was quickly caught
Last night in yon enormous spider's net,
I ne'er saw aught here like a ray. Alas!
I know if mind may bear us up, or no,
For I have such, and shown it before men;
It sinks in solitude: my soul is social.

Mar. I will be with thee.

Jac. Fos. Ah! if it were so!
But *that* they never granted — nor will grant,
And I shall be alone: no men — no books —
Those lying likenesses of lying men.
I asked for even those outlines of their kind,
Which they term annals, history, what you will,
Which men bequeathe as portraits, and they were
Refused me, — so these walls have been my study,
More faithful pictures of Venetian story,
With all their blank, or dismal stains, than is
The Hall not far from hence, which bears on high
Hundreds of doges, and their deeds and dates.

Mar. I come to tell thee the result of their
Last council on thy doom.

Jac. Fos. I know it — look !

[*He points to his limbs, as referring to the
question which he had undergone.*]

Mar. No — no — no more of that: even they
relent
From that atrocity.

Jac. Fos. What then

Mar. That you
Return to Candia.

Jac. Fos. Then my last hope's gone.
I could endure my dungeon, for 't was Venice;
I could support the torture, there was something
In my native air that buoyed my spirits up
Like a ship on the ocean tossed by storms,
But proudly still bestriding the high waves,
And holding on its course; but *there*, afar,
In that accursed isle of slaves and captives,
And unbelievers, like a stranded wreck,
My very soul seemed mouldering in my bosom,
And piecemeal I shall perish, if remanded.

Mar. And *here*?

Jac. Fos. At once — by better means, as briefer.
What! would they even deny me my sire's sepulchre,
As well as home and heritage?

Mar. My husband!
I have sued to accompany thee hence,
And not so hopelessly. This love of thine
For an ungrateful and tyrannic soil

Is passion, and not patriotism ; for me,
So I could see thee with a quiet aspect,
And the sweet freedom of the earth and air,
I would not cavil about climes or regions.
This crowd of palaces and prisons is not
A paradise ; its first inhabitants
Were wretched exiles.

Jac. Fos. Well I know *how* wretched !

Mar. And yet you see how from their banishment
Before the Tartar into these salt isles,
Their antique energy of mind, all that
Remained of Rome for their inheritance,
Created by degrees an ocean-Rome ; *
And shall an evil, which so often leads
To good, depress thee thus ?

Jac. Fos. Had I gone forth
From my own land, like the old patriarchs, seeking
Another region, with their flocks and herds ;
Had I been cast out like the Jews from Zion,
Or like our fathers, driven by Attila
From fertile Italy, to barren islets,

* In Lady Morgan's fearless and excellent work upon Italy, I perceive the expression of "Rome of the Ocean" applied to Venice. The same phrase occurs in the "Two Foscari." My publisher can vouch for me, that the tragedy was written and sent to England some time before I had seen Lady Morgan's work, which I only received on the 16th of August. I hasten, however, to notice the coincidence, and to yield the originality of the phrase to her who first placed it before the public. I am the more anxious to do this, as I am informed (for I have seen but few of the specimens, and those accidentally,) that there have been lately brought against me charges of plagiarism.

I would have given some tears to my late country,
And many thoughts; but afterwards addressed
Myself, with those about me, to create
A new home and fresh state: perhaps I could
Have borne this — though I know not.

Mar. Wherefore not?
It was the lot of millions, and must be
The fate of myriads more.

Jac. Fos. Ay — we but hear
Of the survivors' toil in their new lands,
Their numbers and success; but who can number
The hearts which broke in silence of that parting,
Or after their departure; of that malady*
Which calls up green and native fields to view
From the rough deep, with such identity
To the poor exile's fevered eye, that he
Can scarcely be restrained from treading them?
That melody,† which out of tones and tunes

* The calenture. — [A distemper peculiar to sailors in hot climates. —

“So by a calenture misled
The mariner with rapture sees
On the smooth ocean's azure bed
Enamelled fields and verdant trees:
With eager haste he longs to rove,
In that fantastic scene, and thinks
It must be some enchanted grove,
And in he leaps, and down he sinks.” — SWIFT.]

† Alluding to the Swiss air and its effects. — [The *Ranz des Vaches*, played upon the bagpipe by the young cow-keepers on the mountains: — “An air,” says Rousseau, “so dear to the Swiss, that it was forbidden, under the pain of death, to play it to the troops, as it immediately drew tears from them, and

Collects such pasture for the longing sorrow
Of the sad mountaineer, when far away
From his snow canopy of cliffs and clouds,
That he feeds on the sweet, but poisonous thought,
And dies. You call this *weakness*! It is strength,
I say, — the parent of all honest feeling.
He who loves not his country, can love nothing.

Mar. Obey her, then: 'tis she that puts thee
forth.

Jac. Fos. Ay, there it is; 'tis like a mother's
curse

Upon my soul — the mark is set upon me.
The exiles you speak of went forth by nations,
Their hands upheld each other by the way,
Their tents were pitched together — I'm alone.

Mar. You shall be so no more — I will go with
thee.

Jac. Fos. My best Marina! — and our children?

Mar. They,

I fear, by the prevention of the state's
Abhorrent policy, (which holds all ties

made those who heard it desert, or die of what is called *la maladie du païs*, so ardent a desire did it excite to return to their country. It is in vain to seek in this air for energetic accents capable of producing such astonishing effects, for which strangers are unable to account from the music, which is in itself uncouth and wild. But it is from habit, recollections, and a thousand circumstances, retraced in this tune by those natives who hear it, and reminding them of their country, former pleasures of their youth, and all their ways of living, which occasion a bitter reflection at having lost them."]

As threads, which may be broken at her pleasure,) Will not be suffered to proceed with us.

Jac. Fos. And canst thou leave them?

Mar. Yes. With many a pang.
But — I *can* leave them, children as they are,
To teach you to be less a child. From this
Learn you to sway your feelings, when exacted
By duties paramount; and 'tis our first
On earth to bear.

Jac. Fos. Have I not borne?

Mar. Too much
From tyrannous injustice, and enough
To teach you not to shrink now from a lot,
Which, as compared with what you have undergone
Of late is mercy.

Jac. Fos. Ah! you never yet
Were far away from Venice, never saw
Her beautiful towers in the receding distance,
While every furrow of the vessel's track
Seemed ploughing deep into your heart; you never
Saw day go down upon your native spires
So calmly with its gold and crimson glory,
And after dreaming a disturbed vision
Of them and theirs, awoke and found them not.

Mar. I will divide this with you. Let us think
Of our departure from this much-loved city,
(Since you must *love* it, as it seems,) and this
Chamber of state, her gratitude allots you.
Our children will be cared for by the Doge,
And by my uncles; we must sail ere night.

Jac. Fos. That's sudden. Shall I not behold my father?

Mar. You will.

Jac. Fos. Where?

Mar. Here, or in the ducal chamber —
He said not which. I would that you could bear
Your exile as he bears it.

Jac. Fos. Blame him not.
I sometimes murmur for a moment; but
He could not now act otherwise. A show
Of feeling or compassion on his part
Would have but drawn upon his aged head
Suspicion from "the Ten," and upon mine
Accumulated ills.

Mar. Accumulated!
What pangs are those they have spared you?

Jac. Fos. That of leaving
Venice without beholding him or you,
Which might have been forbidden now, as 't was
Upon my former exile.

Mar. That is true,
And thus far I am also the state's debtor,
And shall be more so when I see us both
Floating on the free waves — away — away —
Be it to the earth's end, from this abhorred,
Unjust and ——

Jac. Fos. Curse it not. If I am silent,
Who dares accuse my country?

Mar. Men and angels!
The blood of myriads reeking up to heaven,

The groans of slaves in chains, and men in dungeons,
Mothers, and wives, and sons, and sires, and subjects,
Held in the bondage of ten bald-heads ; and
Though last, not least, *thy silence*. *Couldst thou say*
Aught in its favor, who would praise like *thee* ?

Jac. Fos. Let us address us then, since so it must
be,
To our departure. Who comes here ?

Enter LOREDANO, attended by Familiars.

Lor. (to the Familiars). Retire,
But leave the torch. [*Exeunt the two Familiars.*

Jac. Fos. Most welcome, noble signor.
I did not deem this poor place could have drawn
Such presence hither.

Lor. 'Tis not the first time
I have visited these places.

Mar. Nor would be
The last, were all men's merits well rewarded.
Came you here to insult us, or remain
As spy upon us, or as hostage for us ?

Lor. Neither are of my office, noble lady !
I am sent hither to your husband, to
Announce "the Ten's" decree.

Mar. That tenderness
Has been anticipated : it is known.

Lor. As how ?

Mar. I have informed him, not so gently,
Doubtless, as your nice feelings would prescribe,
The indulgence of your colleagues ; but he knew it.

If you come for our thanks, take them, and hence !
The dungeon gloom is deep enough without you,
And full of reptiles, not less loathsome, though
Their sting is honester.

Jac. Fos. I pray you, calm you :
What can avail such words ?

Mar. To let him know
That he is known.

Lór. Let the fair dame preserve
Her sex's privilege.

Mar. I have some sons, sir,
Will one day thank you better.

Lor. You do well
To nurse them wisely. Foscari — you know
Your sentence, then ?

Jac. Fos. Return to Candia ?

Lor. True —
For life.

Jac. Fos. Not long.

Lor. I said — for *life*.

Jac. Fos. And I
Repeat — not long.

Lor. A year's imprisonment
In Canea — afterwards the freedom of
The whole isle.

Jac. Fos. Both the same to me : the after
Freedom as is the first imprisonment.
Is 't true my wife accompanies me ?

Lor. Yes,
If she so wills it.

Mar. Who obtained that justice?

Lor. One who wars not with women.

Mar. But oppresses
Men: howsoever let him have *my* thanks
For the only boon I would have asked or taken
From him or such as he is.

Lor. He receives them
As they are offered.

Mar. May they thrive with him
So much! — no more.

Jac. Fos. Is this, sir, your whole mission?
Because we have brief time for preparation,
And you perceive your presence doth disquiet
This lady, of a house noble as yours.

Mar. Nobler!

Lor. How nobler?

Mar. As more generous!
We say the “generous steed” to express the purity
Of his high blood. Thus much I’ve learnt, although
Venetian (who see few steeds save of bronze),
From those Venetians who have skimmed the
coasts

Of Egypt, and her neighbor Araby:
And why not say as soon the “*generous man?*”
If race be aught, it is in qualities
More than in years; and mine, which is as old
As yours, is better in its product, nay —
Look not so stern — but get you back, and pore
Upon your genealogic tree’s most green
Of leaves and most mature of fruits, and there

Blush to find ancestors, who would have blushed
For such a son — thou cold inveterate hater !

Jac. Fos. Again, Marina !

Mar. Again ! *still*, Marina.

See you not, he comes here to glut his hate
With a last look upon our misery ?
Let him partake it !

Jac. Fos. That were difficult.

Mar. Nothing more easy. He partakes it now —
Ay, he may veil beneath a marble brow
And sneering lip the pang, but he partakes it.
A few brief words of truth shame the devil's servants
No less than master ; I have probed his soul
A moment, as the eternal fire, ere long,
Will reach it always. See how he shrinks from me !
With death, and chains, and exile in his hand
To scatter o'er his kind as he thinks fit ;
They are his weapons, not his armor, for
I have pierced him to the core of his cold heart.
I care not for his frowns ! We can but die,
And he but live, for him the very worst
Of destinies : each day secures him more
His tempter's.

Jac. Fos. This is mere insanity.

Mar. It may be so ; and *who* hath made us *mad* ?

Lor. Let her go on ; it irks not me.

Mar. That's false

You came here to enjoy a heartless triumph
Of cold looks upon manifold griefs ! You came
To be sued to in vain — to mark our tears,

And hoard our groans — to gaze upon the wreck
Which you have made a prince's son — my husband;
In short, to trample on the fallen — an office
The hangman shrinks from, as all men from him!
How have you sped? We are wretched, signor, as
Your plots could make, and vengeance could
 desire us,
And how *feel you*?

Lor. As rocks.

Mar. By thunder blasted:
They feel not, but no less are shivered. Come,
Foscari; now let us go, and leave this felon,
The sole fit habitant of such a cell,
Which he has peopled often, but ne'er fitly
Till he himself shall brood in it alone.*

Enter the DOGE.

Jac. Fos. My father!

Doge (embracing him). Jacopo! my son — my son!

Jac. Fos. My father still! How long it is since I
Have heard thee name my name — *our* name!

Doge. My boy!
Couldst thou but know ——

Jac. Fos. I rarely, sir, have murmured.

* [If the two Foscari do nothing to defeat the machinations of their remorseless foe, Marina, the wife of the younger, at least revenges them, by letting loose the venom of her tongue upon their hateful oppressor, which she does without stint or measure; and in a strain of vehemence not inferior to that of the old queen Margaret in Richard the Third. — JEFFREY.]

Doge. I feel too much thou hast not.

Mar. Doge, look there!

[*She points to LOREDANO.*]

Doge. I see the man — what mean'st thou?

Mar. Caution!

Lor. Being

The virtue which this noble lady most
May practise, she doth well to recommend it.

Mar. Wretch! 'tis no virtue, but the policy
Of those who fain must deal perforce with vice:
As such I recommend it, as I would
To one whose foot was on an adder's path.

Doge. Daughter, it is superfluous; I have long
Known Loredano.

Lor. You may know him better.

Mar. Yes; worse he could not.

Jac. Fos. Father, let not these
Our parting hours be lost in listening to
Reproaches, which boot nothing. Is it — is it,
Indeed, our last of meetings?

Doge. You behold
These white hairs!

Jac. Fos. And I feel, besides, that mine
Will never be so white. Embrace me, father!
I loved you ever — never more than now.
Look to my children — to your last child's children;
Let them be all to you which he was once,
And never be to you what I am now.
May I not see *them* also?

Mar. No — not *here*.

Jac. Fos. They might behold their parent any where.

Mar. I would that they beheld their father in
A place which would not mingle fear with love,
To freeze their young blood in its natural current.
They have fed well, slept soft, and knew not that
Their sire was a mere hunted outlaw. Well,
I know his fate may one day be their heritage,
But let it only be their *heritage*,
And not their present fee. Their senses, though
Alive to love, are yet awake to terror;
And these vile damps, too, and yon *thick green wave*
Which floats above the place where we now stand —
A cell so far below the water's level,
Sending its pestilence through every crevice,
Might strike them: *this is not their* atmosphere.
However you — and you — and, most of all,
As worthiest — *you*, sir, noble Loredano!
May breathe it without prejudice.

Jac. Fos. I have not
Reflected upon this, but acquiesce.
I shall depart, then, without meeting them?

Doge. Not so: they shall await you in my chamber.

Jac. Fos. And must I leave them — *all*?

Lor. You must.

Jac. Fos. Not one?

Lor. They are the state's.

Mar. I thought they had been mine.

Lor. They are, in all maternal things.

Mar. That is,

In all things painful. If they're sick, they will
Be left to me to tend them; should they die,
To me to bury and to mourn; but if
They live, they'll make you soldiers, senators,
Slaves, exiles — what *you* will; or if they are
Females with portions, brides and *bribes* for nobles!
Behold the state's care for its sons and mothers!

Lor. The hour approaches, and the wind is fair.

Jac. Fos. How know you that here, where the
genial wind

Ne'er blows in all its blustering freedom?

Lor. 'T was so

When I came here. The galley floats within
A bow-shot of the "Riva di Schiavoni."

Jac. Fos. Father! I pray you to precede me, and
Prepare my children to behold their father.

Doge. Be firm, my son!

Jac. Fos. I will do my endeavor.

Mar. Farewell! at least to this detested dungeon,
And him to whose good offices you owe
In part your past imprisonment.

Lor. And present
Liberation.

Doge. He speaks truth.

Jac. Fos. No doubt! but 'tis
Exchange of chains for heavier chains I owe him.
He knows this, or he had not sought to change them.
But I reproach not.

Lor. The time narrows, signor.

Jac. Fos. Alas! I little thought so lingeringly

To leave abodes like this : but when I feel
That every step I take, even from this cell,
Is one away from Venice, I look back
Even on these dull damp walls, and ——

Doge.

Boy ! no tears.

Mar. Let them flow on : he wept not on the rack
To shame him, and they cannot shame him now.
They will relieve his heart — that too kind heart —
And I will find an hour to wipe away
Those tears, or add my own. I could weep now,
But would not gratify yon wretch so far.
Let us proceed. Doge, lead the way.

Lor. (to the Familiar).

The torch, there !

Mar. Yes, light us on, as to a funeral pyre,
With Loredano mourning like an heir.

Doge. My son, you are feeble ; take this hand.

Jac. Fos.

Alas !

Must youth support itself on age, and I
Who ought to be the prop of yours ?

Lor.

Take mine.

Mar. Touch it not, Foscari ; 'twill sting you.

Signor,

Stand off ! be sure, that if a grasp of yours
Would raise us from the gulf wherein we are plunged,
No hand of ours would stretch itself to meet it.
Come, Foscari, take the hand the altar gave you ;
It could not save, but will support you ever.

[*Exeunt.*

A C T I V.

SCENE I.

A Hall in the Ducal Palace.

Enter LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.

Bar. And have you confidence in such a project?

Lor. I have.

Bar. 'Tis hard upon his years.

Lor. Say rather
Kind to relieve him from the cares of state.

Bar. 'Twill break his heart.

Lor. Age has no heart to break.
He has seen his son's half broken, and, except
A start of feeling in his dungeon, never
Swerved.

Bar. In his countenance, I grant you, never;
But I have seen him sometimes in a calm
So desolate, that the most clamorous grief
Had nought to envy him within. Where is he?

Lor. In his own portion of the palace, with
His son, and the whole race of Foscari.

Bar. Bidding farewell.

Lor. A last. As soon he shall
Bid to his dukedom.

Bar. When embarks the son?

Lor. Forthwith — when this long leave is taken.

'Tis
Time to admonish them again.

Bar. Forbear;
Retrench not from their moments.

Lor. Not I, now
We have higher business for our own. This day
Shall be the last of the old Doge's reign,
As the first of his son's last banishment,
And that is vengeance.

Bar. In my mind, too deep.

Lor. 'Tis moderate — not even life for life, the
rule
Denounced of retribution from all time;
They owe me still my father's and my uncle's.

Bar. Did not the Doge deny this strongly?

Lor. Doubtless.

Bar. And did not this shake your suspicion?

Lor. No.

Bar. But if this deposition should take place
By our united influence in the Council,
It must be done with all the deference
Due to his years, his station, and his deeds.

Lor. As much of ceremony as you will,
So that the thing be done. You may, for aught
I care, depute the Council on their knees,
(Like Barbarossa to the Pope,) to beg him
To have the courtesy to abdicate.

Bar. What, if he will not?

Lor. We'll elect another,
And make him null.

Bar. But will the laws uphold us?

Lor. What laws? — “The Ten” are laws; and
if they were not,
I will be legislator in this business.

Bar. At your own peril?

Lor. There is none, I tell you,
Our powers are such.

Bar. But he has twice already
Solicited permission to retire,
And twice it was refused.

Lor. The better reason
To grant it the third time.

Bar. Unasked?

Lor. It shows
The impression of his former instances:
If they were from his heart, he may be thankful:
If not, 't will punish his hypocrisy.
Come, they are met by this time; let us join them,
And be *thou* fixed in purpose for this once.
I have prepared such arguments as will not
Fail to move them, and to remove him: since
Their thoughts, their objects, have been sounded, do
not

You, with your wonted scruples, teach us pause,
And all will prosper.

Bar. Could I but be certain
This is no prelude to such persecution
Of the sire as has fallen upon the son,
I would support you.

Lor. He is safe, I tell you;

His fourscore years and five may linger on
As long as he can drag them: 't is his throne
Alone is aimed at.

Bar. But discarded princes
Are seldom long of life.

Lor. And men of eighty
More seldom still.

Bar. And why not wait these few years?

Lor. Because we have waited long enough, and
he
Lived longer than enough. Hence! in to council!
[*Exeunt LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.*

Enter MEMMO and a Senator.

Sen. A summons to "the Ten!" Why so?

Mem. "The Ten"

Alone can answer; they are rarely wont
To let their thoughts anticipate their purpose
By previous proclamation. We are summoned —
That is enough.

Sen. For them, but not for us;
I would know why.

Mem. You will know why anon,
If you obey; and if not, you no less
Will know why you should have obeyed.

Sen. I mean not
To oppose them, *but* ——

Mem. In Venice "*but*" 's a traitor.
But me no "*buts*," unless you would pass o'er
The Bridge which few repass.

Sen. I am silent.

Mem. Why
Thus hesitate? "The Ten" have called in aid
Of their deliberation five and twenty
Patricians of the senate — you are one,
And I another; and it seems to me
Both honored by the choice or chance which
leads us
To mingle with a body so august.

Sen. Most true. I say no more.

Mem. As we hope, signor,
And all may honestly, (that is, all those
Of noble blood may,) one day hope to be
Decemvir, it is surely for the senate's
Chosen delegates, a school of wisdom, to
Be thus admitted, though as novices,
To view the mysteries.

Sen. Let us view them: they,
No doubt, are worth it.

Mem. Being worth our lives
If we divulge them, doubtless they are worth
Something, at least to you or me.

Sen. I sought not
A place within the sanctuary; but being
Chosen, however reluctantly so chosen,
I shall fulfil my office.

Mem. Let us not
Be latest in obeying "the Ten's" summons.

Sen. All are not met, but I am of your thought
So far — let's in.

Mem. The earliest are most welcome
In earnest councils — we will not be least so.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter the DOGE, JACOPO FOSCARI, and MARINA.

Jac. Fos. Ah, father! though I must and will
depart,
Yet — yet — I pray you to obtain for me
That I once more return unto my home,
Howe'er remote the period. Let there be
A point of time, as beacon to my heart,
With any penalty annexed they please,
But let me still return.

Doge. Son Jacopo,
Go and obey our country's will: 't is not
For us to look beyond.

Jac. Fos. But still I must
Look back. I pray you think of me.

Doge. Alas!
You ever were my dearest offspring, when
They were more numerous, nor can be less so
Now you are last; but did the state demand
The exile of the disinterred ashes
Of your three goodly brothers, now in earth,
And their desponding shades came flitting round
To impede the act, I must no less obey
A duty, paramount to every duty.

Mar. My husband! let us on: this but prolongs
Our sorrow.

Jac. Fos. But we are not summoned yet;

The galley's sails are not unfurled: — who knows?
The wind may change.

Mar. And if it do, it will not
Change *their* hearts, or your lot: the galley's oar
Will quickly clear the harbor.

Jac. Fos. O, ye elements!
Where are your storms?

Mar. In human breasts. Alas!
Will nothing calm you?

Jac. Fos. Never yet did mariner
Put up to patron saint such prayers for prosperous
And pleasant breezes, as I call upon you,
Ye tutelar saints of my own city! which
Ye love not with more holy love than I,
To lash up from the deep the Adrian waves,
And waken Auster, sovereign of the tempest!
Till the sea dash me back on my own shore
A broken corse upon the barren Lido,
Where I may mingle with the sands which skirt
The land I love, and never shall see more!

Mar. And wish you this with *me* beside you?

Jac. Fos. No —
No — not for thee, too good, too kind! May'st thou
Live long to be a mother to those children
Thy fond fidelity for a time deprives
Of such support! But for myself alone,
May all the winds of heaven howl down the Gulf,
And tear the vessel, till the mariners,
Appalled, turn their despairing eyes on me,
As the Phenicians did on Jonah, then

Cast me out from amongst them, as an offering
To appease the waves. The billow which destroys
me

Will be more merciful than man, and bear me,
Dead, but *still bear* me to a native grave.
From fishers' hands upon the desolate strand,
Which, of its thousand wrecks, hath ne'er received
One lacerated like the heart which then
Will be — But wherefore breaks it not? why live I?

Mar. To man thyself, I trust, with time, to master
Such useless passion. Until now thou wert
A sufferer, but not a loud one: why
What is this to the things thou hast borne in silence —
Imprisonment and actual torture?

Jac. Fos. Double,
Triple, and tenfold torture! But you are right,
It must be borne. Father, your blessing.

Doge. Would
It could avail thee! but no less thou hast it.

Jac. Fos. Forgive —

Doge. What?

Jac. Fos. My poor mother, for my birth,
And me for having lived, and you yourself
(As I forgive you), for the gift of life,
Which you bestowed upon me as my sire.

Mar. What hast thou done?

Jac. Fos. Nothing. I cannot charge
My memory with much save sorrow: but
I have been so beyond the common lot
Chastened and visited, I needs must think

That I was wicked. If it be so, may
What I have undergone here keep me from
A like hereafter!

Mar. Fear not: *that's* reserved
For your oppressors.

Jac. Fos. Let me hope not.

Mar. Hope not?

Jac. Fos. I cannot wish them *all* they have inflicted.

Mar. *All!* the consummate fiends! A thousand fold

May the worm which ne'er dieth feed upon them!

Jac. Fos. They may repent.

Mar. And if they do, Heaven will not
Accept the tardy penitence of demons.

Enter an Officer and Guards.

Offi. Signor! the boat is at the shore — the wind
Is rising — we are ready to attend you.

Jac. Fos. And I to be attended. Once more,
father,
Your hand!

Doge. Take it. Alas! how thine own trembles!

Jac. Fos. No — you mistake; 'tis yours that
shakes, my father.

Farewell!

Doge. Farewell! Is there aught else?

Jac. Fos. No — nothing.
[*To the Officer.*

Lend me your arm, good signor.

Offi. You turn pale —
Let me support you — paler — ho ! some aid there !
Some water !

Mar. Ah, he is dying !

Jac. Fos. Now, I'm ready —
My eyes swim strangely — where's the door ?

Mar. Away !
Let me support him — my best love ! Oh, God !
How faintly beats this heart — this pulse !

Jac. Fos. The light !
Is it the light ? — I am faint.

[Officer presents him with water.]

Offi. He will be better,
Perhaps, in the air.

Jac. Fos. I doubt not. Father — wife —
Your hands !

Mar. There's death in that damp clammy grasp.
Oh God ! — My Foscari, how fare you ?

Jac. Fos. Well !
[He dies.]

Offi. He's gone !

Doge. He's free.

Mar. No — no, he is not dead ;
There must be life yet in that heart — he could not
Thus leave me.

Doge. Daughter !

Mar. Hold thy peace, old man !
I am no daughter now — thou hast no son.
Oh, Foscari !

Offi. We must remove the body.

Mar. Touch it not, dungeon miscreants! your
base office

Ends with his life, and goes not beyond murder,
Even by your murderous laws. Leave his remains
To those who know to honor them.

Offi. I must
Inform the signory, and learn their pleasure.

Doge. Inform the signory, from *me*, the Doge,
They have no further power upon those ashes:
While he lived, he was theirs, as fits a subject —
Now he is *mine* — my broken-hearted boy!

[*Exit Officer.*]

Mar. And I must live!

Doge. Your children live, Marina.

Mar. My children! true — they live, and I must
live

To bring them up to serve the state, and die
As died their father. Oh! what best of blessings
Were barrenness in Venice! Would my mother
Had been so!

Doge. My unhappy children!

Mar. What!

You feel it then at last — *you*! — Where is now
The stoic of the state?

Doge (*throwing himself down by the body*). *Here!*

Mar. Ay, weep on!

I thought you had no tears — you hoarded them
Until they are useless; but weep on! he never
Shall weep more — never, never more.

Enter LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.

Lor. What's here?

Mar. Ah! the devil come to insult the dead!
Avaunt!

Incarnate Lucifer! 'tis holy ground.

A martyr's ashes now lie there, which make it
A shrine. Get thee back to thy place of torment!

Bar. Lady, we knew not of this sad event,
But passed here merely on our path from council.

Mar. Pass on.

Lor. We sought the Doge.

Mar. (*pointing to the Doge, who is still on the
ground by his son's body*). He's busy, look,
About the business *you* provided for him.
Are ye content?

Bar. We will not interrupt
A parent's sorrows.

Mar. No, ye only make them,
Then leave them.

Doge (rising). Sirs, I am ready.

Bar. No — not now.

Lor. Yet 'twas important.

Doge. If 'twas so, I can
Only repeat — I am ready.

Bar. It shall not be
Just now, though Venice tottered o'er the deep
Like a frail vessel. I respect your griefs.

Doge. I thank you. If the tidings which you
bring
Are evil, you may say them; nothing further

Can touch me more than him thou look'st on there ;
If they be good, say on ; you need not *fear*
That they can *comfort* me.

Bar. I would they could !

Doge. I spoke not to *you*, but to Loredano.
He understands me.

Mar. Ah ! I thought it would be so

Doge. What mean you ?

Mar. Lo ! there is the blood beginning
To flow through the dead lips of Foscari —
The body bleeds in presence of the assassin.

[*To* LOREDANO.

Thou cowardly murderer by law, behold
How death itself bears witness to thy deeds !

Doge. My child ! this is a phantasy of grief.
Bear hence the body. [*To his attendants.*] Signors,
if it please you,
Within an hour I'll hear you.

[*Exeunt* DOGE, MARINA, and attendants with the
body. *Manent* LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.

Bar. He must not
Be troubled now.

Lor. He said himself that nought
Could give him trouble further.

Bar. These are words ;
But grief is lonely, and the breaking in
Upon it barbarous.

Lor. Sorrow preys upon
Its solitude, and nothing more diverts it
From its sad visions of the other world

Than calling it at moments back to this.

The busy have no time for tears.

Bar. And therefore
You would deprive this old man of all business?

Lor. The thing's decreed. The Giunta and "the
Ten"

Have made it law — who shall oppose that law?

Bar. Humanity!

Lor. Because his son is dead?

Bar. And yet unburied.

Lor. Had we known this when
The act was passing, it might have suspended
Its passage, but impedes it not — once past.

Bar. I'll not consent.

Lor. You have consented to
All that's essential — leave the rest to me.

Bar. Why press his abdication now?

Lor. The feelings
Of private passion may not interrupt
The public benefit; and what the state
Decides to-day must not give way before
To-morrow for a natural accident.

Bar. You have a son.

Lor. I *have* — and *had* a father

Bar. Still so inexorable?

Lor. Still.

Bar. But let him
Inter his son before we press upon him
This edict.

Lor. Let him call up into life

My sire and uncle — I consent. Men may,
Even aged men, be, or appear to be,
Sires of a hundred sons, but cannot kindle
An atom of their ancestors from earth.
The victims are not equal; he has seen
His sons expire by natural deaths, and I
My sires by violent and mysterious maladies.
I used no poison, bribed no subtle master
Of the destructive art of healing, to
Shorten the path to the eternal cure.
His sons — and he had four — are dead, without
My dabbling in vile drugs.

Bar. And art thou sure
He dealt in such?

Lor. Most sure.

Bar. And yet he seems
All openness.

Lor. And so he seemed not long
Ago to Carmagnuola.

Bar. The attainted
And foreign traitor?

Lor. Even so: when *he*,
After the very night in which “the Ten”
(Joined with the Doge) decided his destruction,
Met the great Duke at daybreak with a jest,
Demanding whether he should augur him
“The good day or good night?” his Doge-ship
answered,
“That he in truth had passed a night of vigil,
“In which (he added with a gracious smile),

"There often has been question about you." *

'Twas true; the question was the death resolved
Of Carmagnuola, eight months ere he died;
And the old Doge, who knew him doomed, smiled
on him

With deadly cozenage, eight long months before-
hand —

Eight months of such hypocrisy as is
Learnt but in eighty years. Brave Carmagnuola
Is dead; so is young Foscari and his brethren —
I never *smiled* on *them*.

Bar. Was Carmagnuola
Your friend?

Lor. He was the safeguard of the city.
In early life its foe, but in his manhood,
Its saviour first, then victim.

Bar. Ah! that seems
The penalty of saving cities. He
Whom we now act against not only saved
Our own, but added others to her sway.

Lor. The Romans (and we ape them) gave a
crown

To him who took a city; and they gave
A crown to him who saved a citizen
In battle: the rewards are equal. Now,
If we should measure forth the cities taken
By the Doge Foscari, with citizens
Destroyed by him, or *through* him, the account

* An historical fact. See *Daru*, tom. ii.

Were fearfully against him, although narrowed
To private havoc, such as between him
And my dead father.

Bar. Are you then thus fixed?

Lor. Why, what should change me?

Bar.- That which changes me:
But you, I know, are marble to retain
A feud. But when all is accomplished, when
The old man is deposed, his name degraded,
His sons all dead, his family depressed,
And you and yours triumphant, shall you sleep?

Lor. More soundly.

Bar. That's an error, and you'll find it
Ere you sleep with your fathers.

Lor. They sleep not
In their accelerated graves, nor will
Till Foscari fills his. Each night I see them
Stalk frowning round my couch, and, pointing to-
wards

The ducal palace, marshal me to vengeance.

Bar. Fancy's distemperature! There is no passion
More spectral or fantastical than Hate;
Not even its opposite, Love, so peoples air
With phantoms, as this madness of the heart

Enter an Officer.

Lor. Where go you, sirrah?

Offi. By the ducal order
To forward the preparatory rites
For the late Foscari's interment.

Bar. Their
Vault has been often opened of late years.

Lor. 'T will be full soon, and may be closed for
ever.

Offi. May I pass on?

Lor. You may.

Bar. How bears the Doge
This last calamity?

Offi. With desperate firmness.
In presence of another he says little,
But I perceive his lips move now and then ;
And once or twice I heard him, from the adjoining
Apartment mutter forth the words — “ My son ! ”
Scarce audibly. I must proceed. [*Exit Officer.*

Bar. This stroke
Will move all Venice in his favor.

Lor. Right !
We must be speedy : let us call together
The delegates appointed to convey
The council's resolution.

Bar. I protest
Against it at this moment.

Lor. As you please —
I'll take their voices on it ne'ertheless,
And see whose most may sway them, yours or mine.

[*Exeunt BARBARIGO and LOREDANO.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The DOGE's Apartment.

The DOGE and Attendants.

Att. My lord, the deputation is in waiting;
But add, that if another hour would better
Accord with your will, they will make it theirs.

Doge. To me all hours are like. Let them approach. [*Exit Attendant.*

An Officer. Prince! I have done your bidding.

Doge. What command?

Offi. A melancholy one — to call the attendance
Of ——

Doge. True — true — true: I crave your pardon. I
Begin to fail in apprehension, and
Wax very old — old almost as my years.
Till now I fought them off, but they begin
To overtake me.

*Enter the Deputation, consisting of six of the Signory
and the Chief of the Ten.*

Noblemen, your pleasure!

Chief of the Ten. In the first place, the Council
doth condole

With the Doge on his late and private grief.

Doge. No more — no more of that.

Chief of the Ten. Will not the Duke
Accept the homage of respect?

Doge. I do
Accept it as 'tis given — proceed.

Chief of the Ten. “The Ten,”
With a selected giunta from the senate
Of twenty-five of the best born patricians,
Having deliberated on the state
Of the republic, and the o’erwhelming cares
Which, at this moment, doubly must oppress
Your years, so long devoted to your country,
Have judged it fitting, with all reverence,
Now to solicit from your wisdom (which
Upon reflection must accord in this),
The resignation of the ducal ring,
Which you have worn so long and venerably :
And to prove that they are not ungrateful, nor
Cold to your years and services, they add
An appanage of twenty hundred golden
Ducats, to make retirement not less splendid
Than should become a sovereign’s retreat.

Doge. Did I hear rightly ?

Chief of the Ten. Need I say again ?

Doge. No. — Have you done ?

Chief of the Ten. I have spoken. Twenty-four
Hours are accorded you to give an answer.

Doge. I shall not need so many seconds.

Chief of the Ten. We
Will now retire.

Doge. Stay ! Four and twenty hours
Will alter nothing which I have to say.

Chief of the Ten. Speak !

Doge. When I twice before reiterated
My wish to abdicate, it was refused me :
And not alone refused, but ye exacted
An oath from me that I would never more
Renew this instance. I have sworn to die
In full exertion of the functions, which
My country called me here to exercise,
According to my honor and my conscience —
I cannot break *my* oath.

Chief of the Ten. Reduce us not
To the alternative of a decree,
Instead of your compliance.

Doge. Providence
Prolongs my days to prove and chasten me ;
But ye have no right to reproach my length
Of days, since every hour has been the country's.
I am ready to lay down my life for her,
As I have laid down dearer things than life :
But for my dignity — I hold it of
The *whole* republic ; when the *general* will
Is manifest, then you shall all be answered.

Chief of the Ten. We grieve for such an answer ;
but it cannot
Avail you aught.

Doge. I can submit to all things,
But nothing will advance ; no, not a moment.
What you decree — decree.

Chief of the Ten. With this, then, must we
Return to those who sent us ?

Doge. You have heard me.

Chief of the Ten. With all due reverence we
retire. [*Exeunt the Deputation, etc.*]

Enter an Attendant.

Att. My lord,
The noble dame Marina craves an audience.

Doge. My time is hers.

Enter MARINA.

Mar. My lord, if I intrude —
Perhaps you fain would be alone?

Doge. Alone,
Alone, come all the world around me, I
Am now and evermore. But we will bear it.

Mar. We will, and for the sake of those who are,
Endeavor — Oh my husband!

Doge. Give it way;
I cannot comfort thee.

Mar. He might have lived,
So formed for gentle privacy of life,
So loving, so beloved; the native of
Another land, and who so blest and blessing
As my poor Foscari? Nothing was wanting
Unto his happiness and mine save not
To be Venetian.

Doge. Or a prince's son.

Mar. Yes; all things which conduce to other
men's
Imperfect happiness or high ambition,
By some strange destiny, to him proved deadly.

The country and the people whom he loved,
The prince of whom he was the elder born,
And ——

Doge. Soon may be a prince no longer.

Mar. How ?

Doge. They have taken my son from me, and now
aim

At my too long worn diadem and ring.
Let them resume the gewgaws !

Mar. Oh the tyrants !

In such an hour too !

Doge. 'T is the fittest time ;
An hour ago I should have felt it.

Mar. And

Will you not now resent it ? — Oh for vengeance !
But he, who, had he been enough protected,
Might have repaid protection in this moment,
Cannot assist his father.

Doge. Nor should do so
Against his country, had he a thousand lives
Instead of that ——

Mar. They tortured from him. This
May be pure patriotism. I am a woman :
To me my husband and my children were
Country and home. I loved *him* — how I loved him !
I have seen him pass through such an ordeal as
The old martyrs would have shrunk from : he is
gone,

And I, who would have given my blood for him,
Have nought to give but tears ! But could I compass

The retribution of his wrongs!— Well, well;
I have sons, who shall be men.

Doge. Your grief distracts you.

Mar. I thought I could have borne it, when I
saw him

Bowed down by such oppression; yes, I thought
That I would rather look upon his corse
Than his prolonged captivity:— I am punished
For that thought now. Would I were in his grave!

Doge. I must look on him once more.

Mar. Come with me!

Doge. Is he ——

Mar. Our bridal bed is now his bier.

Doge. And he is in his shroud!

Mar. Come, come, old man!

[*Exeunt the DOGE and MARINA.*

Enter BARBARIGO and LOREDANO.

Bar. (to an Attendant). Where is the Doge?

Att. This instant retired hence
With the illustrious lady his son's widow.

Lor. Where?

Att. To the chamber where the body lies.

Bar. Let us return, then.

Lor. You forget, you cannot.
We have the implicit order of the Giunta
To await their coming here, and join them in
Their office: they'll be here soon after us.

Bar. And will they press their answer on the
Doge?

Lor. 'T was his own wish that all should be done promptly.

He answered quickly, and must so be answered ;
His dignity is looked to, his estate
Cared for — what would he more ?

Bar. Die in his robes :
He could not have lived long ; but I have done
My best to save his honors, and opposed
This proposition to the last, though vainly.
Why would the general vote compel me hither ?

Lor. 'T was fit that some one of such different
thoughts
From ours should be a witness, lest false tongues
Should whisper that a harsh majority
Dreaded to have its acts beheld by others.

Bar. And not less, I must needs think, for the
sake
Of humbling me for my vain opposition.
You are ingenious, Loredano, in
Your modes of vengeance, nay, poetical,
A very Ovid in the art of *hating* ;
'T is thus (although a secondary object,
Yet hate has microscopic eyes), to you .
I owe, by way of foil to the more zealous,
This undesired association in
Your Giunta's duties.

Lor. How ! — *my* Giunta !

Bar. *Yours !*
They speak your language, watch your nod, approve
Your plans, and do your work. Are they not *yours* ?

Lor. You talk unwarily. 'T were best they hear
not
This from you.

Bar. Oh ! they 'll hear as much one day
From louder tongues than mine ; they have gone
beyond

Even their exorbitance of power : and when
This happens in the most contemned and abject
States, stung humanity will rise to check it.

Lor. You talk but idly.

Bar. That remains for proof.
Here come our colleagues.

Enter the Deputation as before.

Chief of the Ten. Is the Duke aware
We seek his presence ?

Att. He shall be informed.

[Exit Attendant.]

Bar. The Duke is with his son.

Chief of the Ten. If it be so,
We will remit him till the rites are over.
Let us return. 'T is time enough to-morrow.

Lor. (aside to Bar). Now the rich man's hell-fire
upon your tongue,
Unquenched, unquenchable ! I'll have it torn
From its vile babbling roots, till you shall utter
Nothing but sobs through blood, for this ! Sage
signors,

I pray ye be not hasty. *[Aloud to the others.]*

Bar. But be human !

Lor. See, the Duke comes !

Enter the DOGE.

Doge. I have obeyed your summons.

Chief of the Ten. We come once more to urge
our past request.

Doge. And I to answer.

Chief of the Ten. What?

Doge. My only answer.

You have heard it.

Chief of the Ten. Hear *you* then the last decree,
Definitive and absolute!

Doge. To the point —

To the point! I know of old the forms of office,
And gentle preludes to strong acts — Go on!

Chief of the Ten. You are no longer Doge; you
are released

From your imperial oath as sovereign;
Your ducal robes must be put off; but for
Your services, the state allots the appanage
Already mentioned in our former congress.
Three days are left you to remove from hence,
Under the penalty to see confiscated
All your own private fortune.

Doge. That last clause,

I am proud to say, would not enrich the treasury.

Chief of the Ten. Your answer, Duke!

Lor. Your answer, Francis Foscari!

Doge. If I could have foreseen that my old age
Was prejudicial to the state, the chief
Of the republic never would have shown

Himself so far ungrateful, as to place
His own high dignity before his country;
But this *life* having been so many years
Not useless to that country, I would fain
Have consecrated my last moments to her.
But the decree being rendered, I obey.*

Chief of the Ten. If you would have the three
days named extended,
We willingly will lengthen them to eight,
As sign of our esteem.

Doge. Not eight hours, signor,
Nor even eight minutes — There's the ducal ring,
[*Taking off his ring and cap.*]
And there the ducal diadem. And so
The Adriatic's free to wed another.

Chief of the Ten. Yet go not forth so quickly.

Doge. I am old, sir,
And even to move but slowly must begin
To move betimes. Methinks I see amongst you
A face I know not — Senator! your name,
You, by your garb, Chief of the Forty!

Mem. Signor,
I am the son of Marco Memmo.

Doge. Ah!
Your father was my friend. — But sons and fa-
thers! —

What, ho! my servants there!

Atten. My prince!

* [MS. — "The act is passed — I will obey it."]

Doge. No prince —
There are the princes of the prince! [*Pointing to*
the Ten's Deputation.] — Prepare
To part from hence upon the instant.

Chief of the Ten. Why
So rashly? 't will give scandal.

Doge. Answer that;
[*To the Ten.*]
It is your province. — Sirs, bestir yourselves:
To the Servants.

There is one burden which I beg you bear
With care, although 't is past all further harm —
But I will look to that myself.

Bar. He means
The body of his son.

Doge. And call Marina,
My daughter!

Enter MARINA.

Doge. Get thee ready, we must mourn
Elsewhere.

Mar. And everywhere.

Doge. True; but in freedom,
Without these jealous spies upon the great.
Signors, you may depart: what would you more?
We are going: do you fear that we shall bear
The palace with us? Its *old* walls, ten times
As *old* as I am, and I'm very old,
Have served you, so have I, and I and they
Could tell a tale; but I invoke them not

To fall upon you ! else they would, as erst
The pillars of stone Dagon's temple on
The Israelite and his Philistine foes.

Such power I do believe there might exist
In such a curse as mine, provoked by such
As you ; but I curse not. Adieu, good signors !
May the next duke be better than the present.

Lor. The *present* duke is Paschal Malipiero.

Doge. Not till I pass the threshold of these doors.

Lor. Saint Mark's great bell is soon about to toll
For his inauguration.

Doge. Earth and heaven !
Ye will reverberate this peal ; and I
Live to hear this ! — the first doge who e'er heard
Such sound for his successor : Happier he,
My attainted predecessor, stern Faliero —
This insult at the least was spared him.

Lor. What !

Do you regret a traitor ?

Doge. No — I merely
Envy the dead.

Chief of the Ten. My lord, if you indeed
Are bent upon this rash abandonment
Of the state's palace, at the least retire
By the private staircase, which conducts you towards
The landing-place of the canal.

Doge. No. I
Will now descend the stairs by which I mounted
To sovereignty — the Giants' Stairs, on whose
Broad eminence I was invested duke.

My services have called me up those steps,
The malice of my foes will drive me down them.
There five and thirty years ago was I
Installed, and traversed these same halls, from which
I never thought to be divorced except
A corse — a corse, it might be, fighting for them —
But not pushed hence by fellow-citizens.
But come; my son and I will go together —
He to his grave, and I to pray for mine.

Chief of the Ten. What! thus in public?

Doge. I was publicly
Elected, and so will I be deposed.
Marina! art thou willing?

Mar. Here's my arm!

Doge. And here my *staff*: thus propped will I
go forth.

Chief of the Ten. It must not be — the people
will perceive it.

Doge. The people! — There's no people, you
well know it,

Else you dare not deal thus by them or me.
There is a *populace*, perhaps, whose looks
May shame you; but they dare not groan nor curse
you,

Save with their hearts and eyes.

Chief of the Ten. You speak in passion,
Else —

Doge. You have reason. I have spoken much
More than my wont: it is a foible which
Was not of mine, but more excuses you,

Inasmuch as it shows that I approach
A dotage which may justify this deed
Of yours, although the law does not, nor will.
Farewell, sirs!

Bar. You shall not depart without
An escort fitting past and present rank.
We will accompany, with due respect,
The Doge unto his private palace. Say!
My brethren, will we not?

Different voices.

Ay! — Ay!

Doge. You shall not
Stir — in my train, at least. I entered here
As sovereign — I go out as citizen
By the same portals, but as citizen.
All these vain ceremonies are base insults,
Which only ulcerate the heart the more,
Applying poisons there as antidotes,
Pomp is for princes — I am *none*! — That's false,
I *am*, but only to these gates. — Ah!

Lor.

Hark!

[*The great bell of Saint Mark's tolls.*]

Bar. The bell!

Chief of the Ten. St. Mark's, which tolls for the
election
Of Malipiero.

Doge. Well I recognize
The sound! I heard it once, but once before,
And that is five and thirty years ago;
Even *then* I *was not young*.

Bar. Sit down, my lord!
You tremble.

Doge. 'Tis the knell of my poor boy!
My heart aches bitterly.

Bar. I pray you sit.

Doge. No; my seat here has been a throne till
now.

Marina! let us go.

Mar. Most readily.

Doge (*walks a few steps, then stops*). I feel
athirst — will no one bring me here
A cup of water?

Bar. I —

Mar. And I —

Lor. And I —

[*The DOGE takes a goblet from the hand
of LOREDANO.*]

Doge. I take yours, Loredano, from the hand
Most fit for such an hour as this.*

Lor. Why so?

Doge. 'Tis said that our Venetian crystal has
Such pure antipathy to poisons as
To burst, if aught of venom touches it.
You bore this goblet, and it is not broken.

Lor. Well, sir!

Doge. Then it is false, or you are true.
For my own part, I credit neither; 'tis
An idle legend.

Mar. You talk wildly, and

* [MS. — "I take yours, Loredano — 'tis the draught
Most fitting such an hour as this."]

Had better now be seated, nor as yet
Depart. Ah! now you look as looked my husband!

Bar. He sinks! — support him! — quick — a
chair — support him!

Doge. The bell tolls on! — let's hence — my
brain's on fire!

Bar. I do beseech you, lean upon us!

Doge. No!

A sovereign should die standing. My poor boy!
Off with your arms! — *That bell!*

[*The DOGE drops down and dies.**

Mar. My God! My God!

Bar. (to Lor.) Behold! your work's completed!

Chief of the Ten. Is there then

No aid? Call in assistance!

Att. 'Tis all over.

Chief of the Ten. If it be so, at least his obsequies
Shall be such as befits his name and nation,
His rank and his devotion to the duties
Of the realm, while his age permitted him
To do himself and them full justice. Brethren,
Say, shall it not be so?

Bar. He has not had
The misery to die a subject where
He reigned: then let his funeral rites be princely.†

* [The death of the elder Foscari took place not at the palace, but in his own house; not immediately on his descent from the Giants' Stairs, but five days afterwards. — SMEDLEY.]

† [By a decree of the Council, the trappings of supreme power of which the Doge had divested himself while living, were

Chief of the Ten. We are agreed, then?

All, except Lor. answer, Yes.

Chief of the Ten. Heaven's peace be with him!

Mar. Signors, your pardon: this is mockery.

Juggle no more with that poor remnant, which,
A moment since, while yet it had a soul,
(A soul by whom you have increased your empire,
And made your power as proud as was his glory,)
You banished from his palace, and tore down
From his high place, with such relentless coldness;
And now, when he can neither know these honors,
Nor would accept them if he could, you, signors,
Purpose, with idle and superfluous pomp,
To make a pageant over what you trampled.
A princely funeral will be your reproach,
And not his honor.

Chief of the Ten. Lady, we revoke not
Our purposes so readily.

Mar. I know it,
As far as touches torturing the living.
I thought the dead had been beyond even *you*,
Though (some, no doubt) consigned to powers
which may
Resemble that you exercise on earth.
Leave him to me; you would have done so for
His dregs of life, which you have kindly shortened:
It is my last of duties, and may prove

restored to him when dead; and he was interred, with ducal
magnificence, in the church of the Mirorites, the new Doge
attending as a mourner. — See DARU.]

A dreary comfort in my desolation.
Grief is fantastical, and loves the dead,
And the apparel of the grave.

Chief of the Ten. Do you
Pretend still to this office?

Mar. I do, signor.
Though his possessions have been all consumed
In the state's service, I have still my dowry,
Which shall be consecrated to his rites,
And those of—— [*She stops with agitation.*]

Chief of the Ten. Best retain it for your children.

Mar. Ay, they are fatherless, I thank you.

Chief of the Ten. We
Cannot comply with your request. His relics
Shall be exposed with wonted pomp, and followed
Unto their home by the new Doge, not clad
As *Doge*, but simply as a senator.

Mar. I have heard of murderers, who have
interred
Their victims; but ne'er heard until this hour,
Of so much splendor in hypocrisy
O'er those they slew.* I've heard of widows' tears —

* The Venetians appear to have had a particular turn for breaking the hearts of their Doges. The following is another instance of the kind in the Doge Marco Barbarigo: he was succeeded by his brother Agostino Barbarigo, whose chief merit is here mentioned. — “Le doge, blessé de trouver constamment un contradicteur et un censeur si amer dans son frère, lui dit un jour en plein conseil: ‘Messire Augustin, vous faites tout votre possible pour hâter ma mort; vous vous flattez de me succéder; mais, si les autres vous connaissent aussi-bien que je vous con-

Alas! I have shed some — always thanks to you!
 I've heard of *heirs* in *sables* — you have left none
 To the deceased, so you would act the part
 Of such. Well, sirs, your will be done! as one day,
 I trust, Heaven's will be done too!

Chief of the Ten. Know, you, lady,
 To whom ye speak, and perils of such speech?

Mar. I know the former better than yourselves;
 The latter — like yourselves; and can face both.
 Wish you more funerals?

Bar. Heed not her rash words;
 Her circumstances must excuse her bearing.

Chief of the Ten. We will not note them down.

Bar. (turning to *Lor.* who is writing upon his
tablets).

What art thou writing,
 With such an earnest brow, upon thy tablets?

Lor. (pointing to the *Doge's* body). That he has
 paid me!*

nais, ils n'auront garde de vous élire.' La-dessus il se leva, ému de colère, rentra dans son appartement, et mourut quelques jours après. Ce frère, contre lequel il s'était emporté, fut précisément le successeur qu'on lui donna. C'était un mérite dont on aimait à tenir compte; surtout à un parent, de s'être mis en opposition avec le chef de la république." — DARU, *Hist. de Venise*, vol. ii. p. 533.

* "*L'ha pagata.*" An historical fact. See *Hist. de Venise*, par P. Daru, t. ii. p. 411. — [Here the original MS. ends. The two lines which follow, were added by Mr. Gifford. In the margin of the MS., Byron has written, — "If the last line should appear obscure to those who do not recollect the historical fact mentioned in the first act of Loredano's inscription in his book, of

Chief of the Ten. What debt did he owe you?

Lor. A long and just one; Nature's debt and
mine. [*Curtain falls.*]

'Doge Foscari, debtor for the deaths of my father and uncle,'
you may add the following lines to the conclusion of the last
act:—

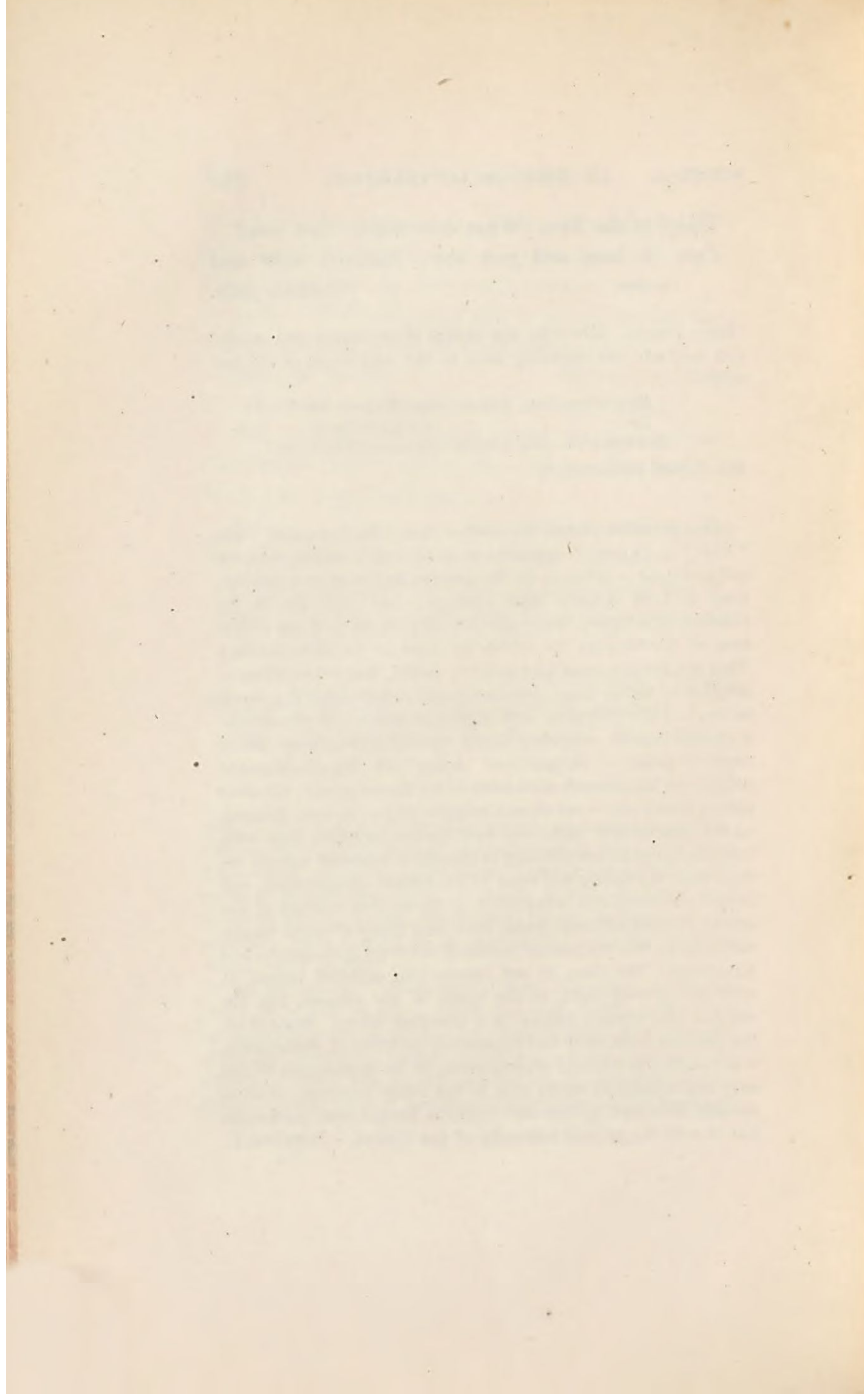
Chief of the Ten. For what has he repaid thee?

Lor. For my father's

And father's brother's death — by his son's and own!

Ask Gifford about this."]

[Considered as poems, we confess that "Sardanapalus" and "The Two Foscari" appear to us to be rather heavy, verbose, and inelegant — deficient in the passion and energy which belongs to Lord Byron's other writings — and still more in the richness of imagery, the originality of thought, and the sweetness of versification for which he used to be distinguished. They are for the most part solemn, prolix, and ostentatious — lengthened out by large preparations for catastrophes that never arrive, and tantalizing us with slight specimens and glimpses of a higher interest scattered thinly up and down many weary pages of pompous declamation. Along with the concentrated pathos and homestruck sentiments of his former poetry, the noble author seems also — we cannot imagine why — to have discarded the spirited and melodious versification in which they were embodied, and to have formed to himself a measure equally remote from the spring and vigor of his former compositions, and from the softness and inflexibility of the ancient masters of the drama. There are some sweet lines, and many of great weight and energy; but the general march of the verse is cumbrous and unmusical. His lines do not vibrate like polished lances, at once strong and light, in the hands of his persons, but are wielded like clumsy batons in a bloodless affray. Instead of the graceful familiarity and idiomatical melodies of Shakspeare, it is apt, too, to fall into clumsy prose, in its approaches to the easy and colloquial style; and, in the loftier passages, is occasionally deformed by low and common images that harmonize but ill with the general solemnity of the diction. — JEFFREY.]



CAIN,
A MYSTERY.

“Now the serpent was more subtile than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made.” — *Gen. ch. iii. ver. 1.*

[“ CAIN ” was begun at Ravenna, on the 16th of July, 1821
— completed (in three acts, and without the chorus) on the 9th
of September — and published, in the same volume with “ Sar-
danapalus ” and “ The Two Foscari,” in December.]

TO
SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

THIS MYSTERY OF CAIN

IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS OBLIGED FRIEND, AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.*

* Sir Walter Scott announced his acceptance of this dedication in the following letter to Mr. Murray: —

“Edinburgh, 4th December, 1821.

“MY DEAR SIR, — I accept, with feelings of great obligation, the flattering proposal of Lord Byron to prefix my name to the very grand and tremendous drama of ‘Cain.’ I may be partial to it, and you will allow I have cause; but I do not know that his Muse has ever taken so lofty a flight amid her former soarings. He has certainly matched Milton on his own ground. Some part of the language is bold, and may shock one class of readers, whose line will be adopted by others out of affectation or envy. But then they must condemn the ‘Paradise Lost,’ if they have a mind to be consistent. The fiend-like reasoning and bold blasphemy of the fiend and of his pupil lead exactly to the point which was to be expected, — the commission of the first murder, and the ruin and despair of the perpetrator.

“I do not see how any one can accuse the author himself of Manicheism. The devil talks the language of that sect, doubtless; because, not being able to deny the existence of the Good

Principle, he endeavors to exalt himself — the Evil Principle — to a seeming equality with the Good; but such arguments, in the mouth of such a being, can only be used to deceive and to betray. Lord Byron might have made this more evident, by placing in the mouth of Adam, or of some good and protecting spirit, the reasons which render the existence of moral evil consistent with the general benevolence of the Deity. The great key to the mystery is, perhaps, the imperfection of our own faculties, which see and feel strongly the partial evils which press upon us, but know too little of the general system of the universe, to be aware how the existence of these is to be reconciled with the benevolence of the great Creator.

“To drop these speculations, you have much occasion for some mighty spirit, like Lord Byron, to come down and trouble the waters; for, excepting ‘The John Bull,’* you seem stagnating strangely in London.

“Yours, my dear Sir,

“Yery truly,

“To John Murray, Esq.

“WALTER SCOTT.”

* [The pungent Sunday newspaper of that name had been lately established, and had excited an immense sensation.]

P R E F A C E .

THE following scenes are entitled "A Mystery," in conformity with the ancient title annexed to dramas upon similar subjects, which were styled "Mysteries, or Moralities." The author has by no means taken the same liberties with his subject which were common formerly, as may be seen by any reader curious enough to refer to those very profane productions, whether in English, French, Italian, or Spanish. The author has endeavored to preserve the language adapted to his characters; and where it is (and this is but rarely) taken from actual *Scripture*, he has made as little alteration, even of words, as the rhythm would permit. The reader will recollect that the book of Genesis does not state that Eve was tempted by a demon, but by "the Serpent;" and that only because he was "the most subtile of all the beasts of the field." Whatever interpretation the Rabbins and the Fathers may have put upon this, I take the words as I find them, and reply, with Bishop Watson upon similar occasions, when the Fathers were quoted to him, as Moderator in the schools of Cam-

bridge, "Behold the book!" — holding up the Scripture.* It is to be recollected, that my present subject has nothing to do with the *New Testament*, to which no reference can be here made without anachronism. With the poems upon similar topics I have not been recently familiar. Since I was twenty, I have never read Milton; but I had read him so frequently before, that this may make little difference. Gesner's "Death of Abel" I have never read since I was eight years of age, at Aberdeen. The general impression of my recollection is delight; but of the contents I remember only that Cain's wife was called Mahala, and Abel's Thirza: in the following pages I have called them "Adah" and "Zillah," the earliest female names which occur in Genesis; they were those of Lamech's wives: those of Cain and Abel are not called by their names. Whether, then, a coincidence of subject may have caused the same in expression, I know nothing, and care as little.†

* ["I never troubled myself with answering any arguments which the opponents in the divinity schools brought against the Articles of the Church, nor ever admitted their authority as decisive of a difficulty; but I used on such occasions to say to them, holding up the New Testament in my hand: 'En sacrum codicem! Here is the fountain of truth; why do you follow the streams derived from it by the sophistry, or polluted by the passions, of man?' " — *Bishop Watson's Life*, vol. i. p. 63.]

† [Here follows, in the original draught, — "I am prepared to be accused of Manicheism, or some other hard name ending in *ism*, which make a formidable figure and awful sound in the eyes and ears of those who would be as much puzzled to explain

The reader will please to bear in mind (what few choose to recollect), that there is no allusion to a future state in any of the books of Moses, nor indeed in the Old Testament.* For a reason for this extraordinary omission he may consult Warburton's "Divine Legation;" whether satisfactory or not, no better has yet been assigned. I have therefore supposed it new to Cain, without, I hope, any perversion of Holy Writ.

With regard to the language of Lucifer, it was difficult for me to make him talk like a clergyman upon the same subjects; but I have done what I could to restrain him within the bounds of spiritual politeness. If he disclaims having tempted Eve in the shape of the Serpent, it is only because the book of Genesis has not the most distant allusion to any thing of the kind, but merely to the Serpent in his serpentine capacity.

the terms so bandied about, as the liberal and pious indulgers in such epithets. Against such I can defend myself, or, if necessary, I can attack in turn."]

* [There *are* numerous passages dispersed throughout the Old Testament which import something more than "an allusion to a future state." In truth, the Old Testament abounds in phrases which imply the immortality of the soul, and which would be insignificant and hardly intelligible, but upon that supposition. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return unto God who gave it." — *Eccl.* xii. 7. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame: and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." — *Dan.* x. 2. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and

• *Note.* — The reader will perceive that the author has partly adopted in this poem the notion of Cuvier, that the world had been destroyed several times before the creation of man. This speculation, derived from the different strata and the bones of enormous and unknown animals found in them, is not contrary to the Mosaic account, but rather confirms it; as no human bones have yet been discovered in those strata, although those of many known animals are found near the remains of the unknown. The assertion of Lucifer, that the pre-Adamite world was also peopled by rational beings much more intelligent than man, and proportionably powerful to the mammoth, etc. etc. is, of course, a poetical fiction to help him to make out his case.

I ought to add, that there is a "tramelogedia" of Alfieri, called "Abele." — I have never read that, nor any other of the posthumous works of the writer, except his *Life*.

that he shall stand in the latter days upon the earth: and though after my skin worms shall destroy my body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." — *Job* xix. 25. — BRIT. REV.]

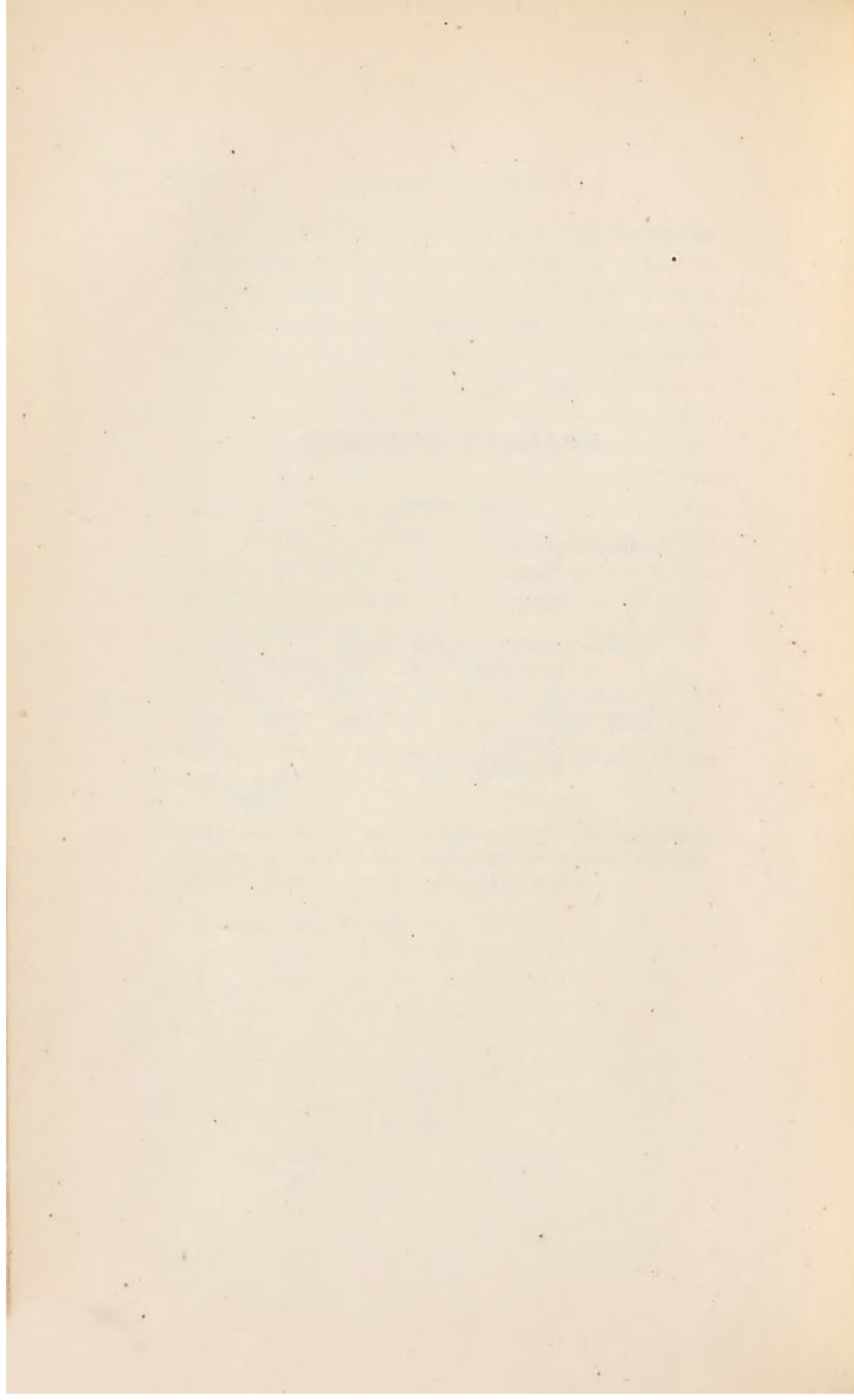
RAVENNA, Sept. 20, 1821.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Men. — ADAM.
CAIN.
ABEL.

Spirits. — ANGEL OF THE LORD.
LUCIFER.

Women. — EVE.
ADAM.
ZILLAH.



CAIN,
A MYSTERY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Land without Paradise. — Time, Sunrise.

ADAM, EVE, CAIN, ABEL, ADAH, ZILLAH, *offering a Sacrifice.*

Adam. GOD, the Eternal! Infinite! All-wise! —
Who out of darkness on the deep didst make
Light on the waters with a word — all hail!
Jehovah, with returning light, all hail!

Eve. God! who didst name the day, and separate
Morning from night, till then divided never —
Who didst divide the wave from wave, and call
Part of thy work the firmament — all hail!

Abel. God! who didst call the elements into
Earth — ocean — air — and fire, and with the day
And night, and worlds which these illuminate,
Or shadow, madest beings to enjoy them,
And love both them and thee — all hail! all hail!

Adah. God, the Eternal! Parent of all things!
Who didst create these best and beauteous beings,
To be beloved, more than all, save thee —
Let me love thee and them : — All hail! all hail!

Zillah. Oh, God! who loving, making, blessing all,
Yet didst permit the Serpent to creep in,
And drive my father forth from Paradise,
Keep us from further evil : — Hail! all hail!

Adam. Son Cain, my first-born, wherefore art
thou silent?

Cain. Why should I speak?

Adam. To pray.*

Cain. Have ye not prayed?

Adam. We have, most fervently.

Cain. And loudly: I
Have heard you.

Adam. So will God, I trust.

Abel. Amen!

Adam. But thou, my eldest born, art silent still.

* ["Prayer," said Lord Byron, at Cephalonia, "does not consist in the act of kneeling, nor in repeating certain words in a solemn manner. Devotion is the affection of the heart, and this I feel; for when I view the wonders of creation, I bow to the majesty of heaven; and when I feel the enjoyment of life, health, and happiness, I feel grateful to God for having bestowed these upon me." — "All this is well," I said, "so far as it goes, but to be a Christian you must go further." — "I read more of the Bible than you are aware," he said: "I have a Bible which my sister gave me, who is an excellent woman, and I read it very often." He went into his bed-room on saying this, and brought out a pocket Bible, finely bound, and showed it to me. — KENNEDY'S *Conversations with Lord B.*, p. 135.]

Cain. 'Tis better I should be so.

Adam. Wherefore so?

Cain. I have nought to ask.

Adam. Nor aught to thank for?

Cain. No.

Adam. Dost thou not live?

Cain. Must I not die?

Eve. Alas!

The fruit of our forbidden tree begins
To fall.*

Adam. And we must gather it again.

Oh, God! why didst thou plant the tree of knowl-
edge? [life?

Cain. And wherefore plucked ye not the tree of
Ye might have then defied him.

Adam. Oh! my son,
Blaspheme not: these are serpent's words.

Cain. Why not?
The snake spoke *truth*: it *was* the tree of knowledge;
It *was* the tree of life: knowledge is good,
And life is good; and how can both be evil?

* [This passage affords a key to the temper and frame of mind of Cain throughout the piece. He disdains the limited existence allotted to him; he has a rooted horror of death, attended with a vehement curiosity as to his nature; and he nourishes a sullen anger against his parents, to whose misconduct he ascribes his degraded state. Added to this, he has an insatiable thirst for knowledge beyond the bounds prescribed to mortality; and this part of the poem bears a strong resemblance to Manfred, whose counterpart, indeed, in the main points of character, Cain seems to be. — CAMPBELL'S MAGAZINE.]

Eve. My boy! thou speakest as I spoke, in sin,
Before thy birth: let me not see renewed
My misery in thine. I have repented.
Let me not see my offspring fall into
The snares beyond the walls of Paradise,
Which e'en in Paradise destroyed his parents.
Content thee with what *is*. Had we been so,
Thou now hadst been contented. — Oh, my son!

Adam. Our orisons completed, let us hence,
Each to his task of toil — not heavy, though
Needful: the earth is young, and yields us kindly
Her fruits with little labor.

Eve. Cain, my son,
Behold thy father cheerful and resigned,
And do as he doth. [*Exeunt ADAM and EVE.*

Zillah. Wilt thou not, my brother?

Abel. Why wilt thou wear this gloom upon thy
brow,
Which can avail thee nothing, save to rouse
The Eternal anger?

Adah. My beloved Cain,
Wilt thou frown even on me?

Cain. No, Adah! no;
I fain would be alone a little while.
Abel, I'm sick at heart; but it will pass.
Precede me, brother — I will follow shortly.
And you, too, sisters, tarry not behind;
Your gentleness must not be harshly met:
I'll follow you anon.

Adah. If not, I will
Return to seek you here.

Abel. The peace of God
Be on your spirit, brother !

[*Exeunt* ABEL, ZILLAH, and ADAH.

Cain. (solus). And this is
Life! — Toil! and wherefore should I toil? — be-
cause

My father could not keep his place in Eden.
What had *I* done in this? — I was unborn:
I sought not to be born; nor love the state
To which that birth has brought me. Why did he
Yield to the serpent and the woman? or,
Yielding, why suffer? What was there in this?
The tree was planted, and why not for him?
If not, why place him near it, where it grew,
The fairest in the centre? They have but
One answer to all questions, “ ’Twas *his* will,
And *he* is good.” How know I that? Because
He is all-powerful, must all-good, too, follow?
I judge but by the fruits — and they are bitter —
Which I must feed on for a fault not mine.
Whom have we here? — A shape like to the angels,
Yet of a sterner and a sadder aspect
Of spiritual essence: why do I quake?
Why should I fear him more than other spirits,
Whom I see daily wave their fiery swords
Before the gates round which I linger oft,
In twilight’s hour, to catch a glimpse of those
Gardens which are my just inheritance,
Ere the night closes o’er the inhibited walls
And the immortal trees which overtop

The cherubim-defended battlements?
If I shrink not from these, the fire-armed angels,
Why should I quail from him who now approaches?
Yet he seems mightier far than them, nor less
Beauteous, and yet not all as beautiful
As he hath been, and might be: sorrow seems
Half of his immortality.* And is it
So? and can aught grieve save humanity?
He cometh.

Enter LUCIFER.†

Lucifer. Mortal!

Cain.

Spirit, who art thou?

* [Cain's description of the approach of Lucifer would have shone in the "Paradise Lost." There is something spiritually fine in this conception of the terror of presentiment of coming evil. — JEFFREY.]

† [Milton, with true tact and feeling, put no metaphysics into Satan's mouth. There is no querulousness, no sneaking doubts, no petty reasoning in "the Archangel fallen." It is a fine, blunt, sublime, characteristic defiance, that reigns throughout, and animates his character; the spirit is still of celestial birth; and all the evil of his speech and act is utterly neutralized by the impossibility of *man's* feeling any sympathy with it. The Satan of Milton is no half-human devil, with enough of earth about him to typify the malignant sceptic, and enough of heaven to throw a shade of sublimity on his very malignity. The Lucifer of Byron is neither a noble-fiend, nor yet a villain-fiend — he does nothing, and he seems nothing — there is no poetry either of character or description about him — he is a poor, sneaking, talking devil — a most wretched metaphysician, without wit enough to save him even from the damnation of criticism — he speaks neither poetry nor common sense. Thomas Aquinas would have flogged him more for his bad logic than his

Lucifer. Master of spirits.

Cain. And being so, canst thou
Leave them, and walk with dust?

Lucifer. I know the thoughts
Of dust, and feel for it, and with you.

Cain. How!
You know my thoughts?

Lucifer. They are the thoughts of all
Worthy of thought; — 'tis your immortal part
Which speaks within you.

Cain. What immortal part?
This has not been revealed: the tree of life
Was withheld from us by my father's folly,

unbelief — and St. Dunstan would have caught him by the nose ere the purblind fiend was aware. — BLACKWOOD.

The impiety chargeable on this mystery consists mainly in this — that the purposeless and gratuitous blasphemies put into the mouth of Lucifer and Cain are left unrefuted, so that they appear introduced for their own sake, and the design of the writer seems to terminate in them. There is no attempt made to prevent their leaving the strongest possible impression on the reader's mind. On the contrary, the arguments, if such they can be called, levelled against the wisdom and goodness of the Creator are put forth with the utmost ingenuity. And it has been the noble poet's endeavor to palliate as much as possible the characters of the Evil Spirit and of the first Murderer; the former of whom is made an elegant, poetical, philosophical sentimentalist, a sort of Manfred, — the latter an ignorant, proud, and self-willed boy. Lucifer, too, is represented as denying all share in the temptation of Eve, which he throws upon the Serpent "in his serpentine capacity;" the author pleading, that he does so, *only* because the book of Genesis has not the most distant allusion to any thing of the kind, and that a reference to the New Testament would be an anachronism. — ECL. REV.]

While that of knowledge, by my mother's haste,
Was plucked too soon; and all the fruit is death!

Lucifer. They have deceived thee; thou shalt live.

Cain. I live,

But live to die: and, living, see nothing
To make death hateful, save an innate clinging,
A loathsome, and yet all invincible
Instinct of life, which I abhor, as I
Despise myself, yet cannot overcome —
And so I live. Would I had never lived!

Lucifer. Thou livest, and must live for ever:
think not

The earth, which is thine outward cov'ring, is
Existence — it will cease, and thou wilt be
No less than thou art now.

Cain. No *less!* and why

No more?

Lucifer. It may be thou shalt be as we.

Cain. And ye?

Lucifer. Are everlasting.

Cain. Are ye nappy?

Lucifer. We are mighty.

Cain. Are ye happy?

Lucifer. No: art thou?

Cain. How should I be so? Look on me!

Lucifer. Poor clay!

And thou pretendest to be wretched! Thou!

Cain. I am:—and thou, with all thy might,
what art thou? [and

Lucifer. One who aspired to be what made thee,
Would not have made thee what thou art.

Cain.

Ah!

Thou look'st almost a god; and ——

Lucifer.

I am none:

And having failed to be one, would be nought
Save what I am. He conquered; let him reign!

Cain. Who?*Lucifer.*

Thy sire's Maker, and the earth's.

Cain.

And heaven's,

And all that in them is. So I have heard
His seraphs sing; and so my father saith.

Lucifer. They say — what they must sing and
say, on pain

Of being that which I am — and thou art —
Of spirits and of men.

Cain.

And what is that?

Lucifer. Souls who dare use their immortality —*
Souls who dare look the Omnipotent tyrant in
His everlasting face, and tell him that
His evil is not good! If he has made,
As he saith — which I know not, nor believe —
But, if he made us — he cannot unmake:

* [In this long dialogue, the tempter tells Cain (who is thus far supposed to be ignorant of the fact) that the soul is immortal, and that "souls who dare use their immortality" are condemned by God to be wretched everlastingly.† This sentiment, which is the pervading *moral* (if we may call it so) of the play, is developed in the lines which follow. — HEBER.]

† "There is nothing against the immortality of the soul in 'Cain' that I recollect. I hold no such opinions; — but, in a drama, the first rebel and the first murderer must be made to talk according to their characters." — *Byron's Letters*.

We are immortal! — nay, he'd *have* us so,
That he may torture: — let him! He is great —
But, in his greatness, is no happier than
We in our conflict! Goodness would not make
Evil; and what else hath he made? But let him
Sit on his vast and solitary throne,
Creating worlds, to make eternity
Less burdensome to his immense existence
And unparticipated solitude;
Let him crowd orb on orb: he is alone
Indefinite, indissoluble tyrant;*
Could he but crush himself, 'twere the best boon
He ever granted: but let him reign on,
And multiply himself in misery!
Spirits and Men, at least we sympathize —
And, suffering in concert, make our pangs
Innumerable, more endurable,
By the unbounded sympathy of all
With all! But *He!* so wretched in his height,
So restless in his wretchedness, must still
Create, and recreate — †

* [The poet rises to the sublime in making Lucifer first inspire Cain with the knowledge of his immortality — a portion of truth which hath the efficacy of falsehood upon the victim; for Cain, feeling himself already unhappy, knowing that his being cannot be abridged, has the less scruple to desire to be as Lucifer, “mighty.” The whole of this speech is truly satanic; a daring and dreadful description given by everlasting despair of the Deity. — GALT.]

† [In MS. — “Create and recreate — perhaps he'll make
One day a Son unto himself — as he
Gave you a father — and if he so doth,
Mark me! that Son will be a sacrifice!”]

Cain. Thou speak'st to me of things which long
have swum

In visions through my thought : I never could
Reconcile what I saw with what I heard.
My father and my mother talk to me
Of serpents, and of fruits and trees : I see
The gates of what they call their Paradise
Guarded by fiery-sworded cherubim,
Which shut them out, and me : I feel the weight
Of daily toil, and constant thought : I look
Around a world where I seem nothing, with
Thoughts which arise within me, as if they
Could master all things — but I thought alone
This misery was *mine*. — My father is
Tamed down ; my mother has forgot the mind
Which made her thirst for knowledge at the risk
Of an eternal curse ; my brother is
A watching shepherd boy, who offers up
The firstlings of the flock to him who bids
The earth yield nothing to us without sweat ;
My sister Zillah sings an earlier hymn
Than the birds' matins ; and my Adah, my
Own and beloved, she, too, understands not
The mind which overwhelms me : never till
Now met I aught to sympathize with me.
'Tis well — I rather would consort with spirits.

Lucifer. And hadst thou not been fit by thine own
soul

For such companionship, I would not now

Have stood before thee as I am : a serpent
Had been enough to charm ye, as before.*

Cain. Ah ! didst *thou* tempt my mother ?

Lucifer. I tempt none,
Save with the truth : was not the tree, the tree
Of knowledge ? and was not the tree of life
Still fruitful ? Did *I* bid her pluck them not ?
Did *I* plant things prohibited within
The reach of beings innocent, and curious
By their own innocence ? I would have made ye
Gods ; and even He who thrust ye forth, so thrust ye
Because “ye should not eat the fruits of life,
And become gods as we.” Were those his words ?

Cain. They were, as I have heard from those
who heard them,
In thunder.

Lucifer. • Then who was the demon ? He
Who would not let ye live, or he who would
Have made ye live for ever in the joy
And power of knowledge ?

Cain. • Would they had snatched both
The fruits, or neither !

Lucifer. One is yours already,
The other may be still.

Cain. How so ?

Lucifer. By being
Yourselves, in your resistance. Nothing can

* [MS. — “Have stood before thee as I am ; but chosen
The serpent’s charming symbol, as before.”]

Quench the mind, if the mind will be itself
And centre of surrounding things — 'tis made
To sway.

Cain. But didst thou tempt my parents?

Lucifer. I?

Poor clay! what should I tempt them for, or how?

Cain. They say the serpent was a spirit.

Lucifer. Who

Saith that? It is not written so on high:
The proud One will not so far falsify,
Though man's vast fears and little vanity
Would make him cast upon the spiritual nature
His own low failing. The snake *was* the snake —
No more; and yet not less than those he tempted
In nature being earth also — *more* in *wisdom*,
Since he could overcome them, and foreknew
The knowledge fatal to their narrow joys.
Think'st thou I'd take the shape of things that die?

Cain. But the thing had a demon?

Lucifer. He but woke one
In those he spake to with his forked tongue.
I tell thee that the serpent was no more
Than a mere serpent: ask the cherubim
Who guard the tempting tree. When thousand ages
Have rolled o'er your dead ashes, and your seed's,
The seed of the then world may thus array
Their earliest fault in fable, and attribute
To me a shape I scorn, as I scorn all
That bows to him, who made things but to bend
Before his sullen, sole eternity;

But we who see the truth, must speak it. Thy
Fond parents listened to a creeping thing, [What
And fell. For what should spirits tempt them?
Was there to envy in the narrow bounds
Of Paradise, that spirits who pervade [not,
Space —— but I speak to thee of what thou know'st
With all thy tree of knowledge.

Cain. But thou canst not
Speak aught of knowledge which I would not know,
And do not thirst to know, and bear a mind
To know.

Lucifer. And heart to look on?

Cain. Be it proved.

Lucifer. Darest thou to look on Death?

Cain. He has not yet
Been seen.

Lucifer. But must be undergone.

Cain. My father
Says he is something dreadful, and my mother
Weeps when he's named; and Abel lifts his eyes
To heaven, and Zillah casts hers to the earth,
And sighs a prayer; and Adah looks on me,
And speaks not.

Lucifer. And thou?

Cain. Thoughts unspeakable
Crowd in my breast to burning, when I hear
Of this almighty Death, who is, it seems,
Inevitable. Could I wrestle with him?
I wrestled with the lion, when a boy,
In play, till he ran roaring from my gripe.

Lucifer. It has no shape; but will absorb all
things
That bear the form of earth-born being.

Cain.

Ah!

I thought it was a being: who could do
Such evil things to beings save a being?

Lucifer. Ask the Destroyer.

Cain.

Who?

Lucifer. The Maker — call him
Which name thou wilt: he makes but to destroy.

Cain. I knew not that, yet thought it, since I
heard

Of death: although I know not what it is,
Yet it seems horrible. I have looked out
In the vast desolate night in search of him;
And when I saw gigantic shadows in
The umbrage of the walls of Eden, chequered
By the far-flashing of the cherubs' swords,
I watched for what I thought his coming;* for
With fear rose longing in my heart to know
What 't was which shook us all — but nothing came.
And then I turned my weary eyes from off
Our native and forbidden Paradise,
Up to the lights above us, in the azure,
Which are so beautiful: shall they, too, die?

* [It may appear a very prosaic, but it is certainly a very obvious criticism on these passages, that the young family of mankind had, long ere this, been quite familiar with the *death of animals* — some of whom Abel was in the habit of offering up as sacrifices; so that it is not quite conceivable that they should be so much at a loss to conjecture what *Death* was. — JEFFREY.]

Lucifer. Perhaps — but long outlive both thine
and thee. [die —

Cain. I'm glad of that: I would not have them
They are so lovely. What is death? I fear,
I feel, it is a dreadful thing; but what,
I cannot compass: 'tis denounced against us,
Both them who sinned and sinned not, as an ill —
What ill?

Lucifer. To be resolved into the earth.

Cain. But shall I know it?

Lucifer. As I know not death
I cannot answer.

Cain. Were I quiet earth
That were no evil: would I ne'er had been
Aught else but dust!

Lucifer. That is a grovelling wish,
Less than thy father's, for he wished to know.

Cain. But not to live, or wherefore plucked he not
The life-tree?

Lucifer. He was hindered.

Cain. Deadly error!
Not to snatch first that fruit: — but ere he plucked
The knowledge, he was ignorant of death.
Alas! I scarcely now know what it is,
And yet I fear it — fear I know not what! [see

Lucifer. And I, who know all things, fear nothing.
What is true knowledge.

Cain. Wilt thou teach me all?

Lucifer. Ay, upon one condition.

Cain. Name it.

Lucifer. That
Thou dost fall down and worship me — thy Lord.

Cain. Thou art not the Lord my father worships.

Lucifer. No.

Cain. His equal? [him!

Lucifer. No; — I have nought in common with
Nor would: I would be aught above — beneath —
Aught save a sharer or a servant of
His power. I dwell apart; but I am great: —
Many there are who worship me, and more
Who shall — be thou amongst the first.

Cain. I never
As yet have bowed unto my father's God,
Although my brother Abel oft implores
That I would join with him in sacrifice: —
Why should I bow to thee?

Lucifer. Hast thou ne'er bowed
To him?

Cain. Have I not said it? — need I say it?
Could not thy mighty knowledge teach thee that?

Lucifer. He who bows not to him has bowed to
me!

Cain. But I will bend to neither.

Lucifer. Ne'er the less,
Thou art my worshipper: not worshipping
Him makes thee mine the same.

Cain. And what is that?

Lucifer. Thou'lt know here — and hereafter.

Cain. Let me but
Be taught the mystery of my being.

Lucifer. Follow
Where I will lead thee.

Cain. But I must retire
To till the earth — for I had promised —

Lucifer. What ?

Cain. To cull some first-fruits.

Lucifer. Why ?

Cain. To offer up
With Abel on an altar.

Lucifer. Saidst thou not
Thou ne'er hadst bent to him who made thee ?

Cain. Yes —
But Abel's earnest prayer has wrought upon me ;
The offering is more his than mine — and Adah —

Lucifer. Why dost thou hesitate ?

Cain. She is my sister,
Born on the same day, of the same womb ; and
She wrung from me, with tears, this promise ;
and

Rather than see her weep, I would, methinks,
Bear all — and worship aught.

Lucifer. Then follow me !

Cain. I will.*

Enter ADAH.

Adah. My brother, I have come for thee ;
It is our hour of rest and joy — and we
Have less without thee. Thou hast labored not
This morn ; but I have done thy task : the fruits

* [The first interview of Lucifer with Cain is full of sublimity. -- JEFFREY.]

Are ripe, and glowing as the light which ripens :
Come away.

Cain. See'st thou not ?

Adah. I see an angel ;
We have seen many : will he share our hour
Of rest ? — he is welcome.

Cain. But he is not like
The angels we have seen.

Adah. Are there, then, others ?
But he is welcome, as they were : they deigned
To be our guests — will he ?

Cain (to Lucifer). Wilt thou ?

Lucifer. I ask
Thee to be mine.

Cain. I must away with him.

Adah. And leave us ?

Cain. Ay.

Adah. And *me* ?

Cain. Beloved Adah !

Adah. Let me go with thee.

Lucifer. No, she must not.

Adah. Who
Art thou that steppest between heart and heart ?

Cain. He is a god.

Adah. How know'st thou ?

Cain. He speaks like
A god.

Adah. So did the serpent, and it lied. [that

Lucifer. Thou errest, Adah ! — was not the tree
Of knowledge ?

Adah. Ay — to our eternal sorrow.

Lucifer. And yet that grief is knowledge — so he
lied not :

And if he did betray you, 'twas with truth ;
And truth in its own essence cannot be
But good.

Adah. But all we know of it has gathered
Evil on ill : expulsion from our home,
And dread, and toil, and sweat, and heaviness ;
Remorse of that which was — and hope of that
Which cometh not. Cain ! walk not with this spirit.
Bear with what we have borne, and love me — I
Love thee.

Lucifer. More than thy mother, and thy sire ?

Ada. I do. Is that a sin, too ?

Lucifer. No, not yet,
It one day will be in your children.

Adah. What !
Must not my daughter love her brother Enoch ?

Lucifer. Not as thou lovest Cain.

Adah. Oh, my God !
Shall they not love and bring forth things that love
Out of their love ? have they not drawn their milk
Out of this bosom ? was not he, their father,
Born of the same sole womb, in the same hour
With me ? did we not love each other ? and
In multiplying our being multiply
Things which will love each other as we love
Them ? — And as I love thee, my Cain ! go not
Forth with this spirit ; he is not of ours.

Lucifer. The sin I speak of is not of my making,
And cannot be a sin in you — whate'er
It seem in those who will replace ye in
Mortality.*

Adah. What is the sin which is not
Sin in itself? Can circumstance make sin
Or virtue? — if it doth, we are the slaves
Of — [higher

Lucifer. Higher things than ye are slaves: and
Than them or ye would be so, did they not
Prefer an independency of torture
To the smooth agonies of adulation,
In hymns and harpings, and self-seeking prayers,
To that which is omnipotent, because
It is omnipotent, and not from love,
But terror and self-hope.

Adah. Omnipotence
Must be all goodness.

Lucifer. Was it so in Eden?

Adah. Fiend! tempt me not with beauty; thou
art fairer
Than was the serpent, and as false.

Lucifer. As true.
Ask Eve, your mother: bears she not the knowledge
Of good and evil?

Adah. Oh, my mother! thou
Hast plucked a fruit more fatal to thine offspring
Than to thyself; thou at the least hast passed

* [It is impossible not to be struck with the resemblance
between many of these passages and others in *Manfred*.]

Thy youth in Paradise, in innocent
And happy intercourse with happy spirits :
But we, thy children, ignorant of Eden,
Are girt about by demons, who assume
The words of God, and tempt us with our own
Dissatisfied and curious thoughts — as thou
Wert worked on by the snake, in thy most flushed
And heedless, harmless wantonness of bliss.
I cannot answer this immortal thing
Which stands before me ; I cannot abhor him ;
I look upon him with a pleasing fear,
And yet I fly not from him : in his eye
There is a fastening attraction which
Fixes my fluttering eyes on his ; my heart
Beats quick ; he awes me, and yet draws me near,
Nearer and nearer : — Cain — Cain — save me from
him !

Cain. What dreads my Adah ? This is no ill spirit.

Adah. He is not God — nor God's : I have beheld
The cherubs and the seraphs ; he looks not
Like them.

Cain. But there are spirits loftier still —
The archangels.

Lucifer. And still loftier than the archangels.

Adah. Ay — but not blessed.

Lucifer. If the blessedness
Consists in slavery — no.

Adah. I have heard it said,
The seraphs *love most* — cherubim *know most* —
And this should be a cherub — since he loves not.

Lucifer. And if the higher knowledge quenches
love,
What must *he be* you cannot love when known? *
Since the all-knowing cherubim love least,
The seraphs' love can be but ignorance:
That they are not compatible, the doom
Of thy fond parents, for their daring, proves.
Choose betwixt love and knowledge — since there is
No other choice: your sire hath chosen already;
His worship is but fear.

Adah. Oh, Cain! choose love.

Cain. For thee, my Adah, I choose not — it was
Born with me — but I love nought else.

Adah. Our parents?

Cain. Did they love us when they snatched from
the tree
That which hath driven us all from Paradise?

Adah. We were not born then — and if we had
been,
Should we not love them and our children, Cain?

Cain. My little Enoch! and his lisping sister!
Could I but deem them happy, I would half
Forget — but it can never be forgotten
Through thrice a thousand generations! never
Shall men love the remembrance of the man
Who sowed the seed of evil and mankind
In the same hour! They plucked the tree of science

* [MS. — “What can *he be* who places love in ignorance?”]

And sin — and, not content with their own sorrow,
Begot *me* — *thee* — and all the few that are,
And all the unnumbered and innumerable
Multitudes, millions, myriads, which may be,
To inherit agonies accumulated
By ages! — and *I* must be sire of such things!
Thy beauty and thy love — my love and joy,
The rapturous moment and the placid hour,
All we love in our children and each other,
But lead them and ourselves through many years
Of sin and pain — or few, but still of sorrow,
Interchecked with an instant of brief pleasure,
To Death — the unknown! Methinks the tree of
knowledge

Hath not fulfilled its promise: — if they sinned,
At least they ought to have known all things that
are

Of knowledge — and the mystery of death.
What do they know? — that they are miserable.
What need of snakes and fruits to teach us that?

Adah. I am not wretched, Cain, and if thou
Wert happy —

Cain. Be thou happy, then, alone —
I will have nought to do with happiness,
Which humbles me and mine.

Adah. Alone I could not,
Nor *would* be happy: but with those around us
I think I could be so, despite of death,
Which, as I know it not, I dread not, though

It seems an awful shadow — if I may
Judge from what I have heard.

Lucifer. And thou couldst not
Alone, thou say'st, be happy?

Adah. Alone! Oh, my God!
Who could be happy and alone, or good?
To me my solitude seems sin; unless
When I think how soon I shall see my brother,
His brother, and our children, and our parents.

Lucifer. Yet thy God is alone; and is he happy,
Lonely, and good?

Adah. He is not so; he hath
The angels and the mortals to make happy,
And thus becomes so in diffusing joy;
What else can joy be, but the spreading joy?

Lucifer. Ask of your sire, the exile fresh from
Eden;
Or of his first-born son: ask your own heart;
It is not tranquil.

Adah. Alas! no! and you —
Are you of heaven?

Lucifer. If I am not, inquire
The cause of this all-spreading happiness
(Which you proclaim) of the all-great and good
Maker of life and living things; it is
His secret, and he keeps it. *We* must bear,
And some of us resist, and both in vain,
His seraphs say: but it is worth the trial,
Since better may not be without: there is
A wisdom in the spirit, which directs

To right, as in the dim blue air the eye
Of you, young mortals, lights at once upon
The star which watches, welcoming the morn.

Adah. It is a beautiful star ; I love it for
Its beauty.

Lucifer. And why not adore ?

Adah. Our father
Adores the Invisible only.

Lucifer. But the symbols
Of the Invisible are the loveliest
Of what is visible ; and yon bright star
Is leader of the host of heaven.

Adah. Our father
Saith that he has beheld the God himself
Who made him and our mother.

Lucifer. Hast *thou* seen him ?

Adah. Yes — in his works.

Lucifer. But in his being ?

Adah. No —

Save in my father, who is God's own image ;
Or in his angels, who are like to thee —
And brighter, yet less beautiful and powerful
In seeming : as the silent sunny noon,
All light, they look upon us ; but thou seem'st
Like an ethereal night, where long white clouds
Streak the deep purple, and unnumbered stars
Spangle the wonderful mysterious vault
With things that look as if they would be suns ;
So beautiful, unnumbered, and endearing,
Not dazzling, and yet drawing us to them,

They fill my eyes with tears, and so dost thou.
Thou seem'st unhappy : do not make us so,
And I will weep for thee.*

Lucifer. Alas ! those tears !
Could'st thou but know what oceans will be shed ——

Adah. By me ?

Lucifer. By all.

Adah. What all ?

Lucifer. The million millions —
The myriad myriads — the all-peopled earth —
The unpeopled earth — and the o'er-peopled Hell,
Of which thy bosom is the germ.

Adah. O Cain !

This spirit curseth us.

Cain. Let him say on ;

Him will I follow.

Adah. Whither ?

Lucifer. To a place

* [In the drawing of Cain himself, there is much vigorous expression. It seems, however, as if, in the effort to give to Lucifer that "spiritual politeness" which the poet professes to have in view, he has reduced him rather below the standard of diabolic dignity, which was necessary to his dramatic interest. He has scarcely "given the devil his due." We thought Lord Byron knew better. Milton's Satan, with his faded majesty, and blasted but not obliterated glory, holds us suspended between terror and amazement, with something like awe of his spiritual essence and lost estate ; but Lord Byron has introduced him to us as elegant, pensive, and beautiful, with an air of sadness and suffering that ranks him with the oppressed, and bespeaks our pity. Thus, in this dialogue with Adah, he comes forth to our view so qualified as to engage our sympathies. —
BRIT CRIT.]

Whence he shall come back to thee in an hour;
But in that hour see things of many days.

Adah. How can that be?

Lucifer. Did not your Maker make
Out of old worlds this new one in few days?
And cannot I, who aided in this work,
Show in an hour what he hath made in many,
Or hath destroyed in few?

Cain. Lead on.

Adah. Will he,
In sooth, return within an hour?

Lucifer. He shall.
With us acts are exempt from time, and we
Can crowd eternity into an hour,
Or stretch an hour into eternity:
We breathe not by a mortal measurement —
But that's a mystery. Cain, come on with me.

Adah. Will he return?

Lucifer. Ay, woman! he alone
Of mortals from that place (the first and last
Who shall return, save ONE), shall come back to thee,
To make that silent and expectant world
As populous as this: at present there
Are few inhabitants.

Adah. Where dwellest thou?

Lucifer. Throughout all space. Where should I
dwell? Where are
Thy God or Gods — there am I: all things are
Divided with me; life and death — and time —
Eternity — and heaven and earth — and that

Which is not heaven nor earth, but peopled with
Those who once peopled or shall people both —
These are my realms! So that I do divide
His, and possess a kingdom which is not
His. If I were not that which I have said,
Could I stand here? His angels are within
Your vision.

Adah. So they were when the fair serpent
Spoke with our mother first.

Lucifer. Cain! thou hast heard.
If thou dost long for knowledge, I can satiate
That thirst; nor ask thee to partake of fruits
Which shall deprive thee of a single good
The conqueror has left thee. Follow me.

Cain. Spirit, I have said it.

[*Exeunt LUCIFER and CAIN.*

Adah (follows, exclaiming). Cain! my brother!
Cain!

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The Abyss of Space.

Cain. I tread on air, and sink not; yet I fear
To sink.

Lucifer. Have faith in me, and thou shalt be
Borne on the air, of which I am the prince.

Cain. Can I do so without impiety?

Lucifer. Believe — and sink not! doubt — and
perish! thus
Would run the edict of the other God,
Who names me demon to his angels; they
Echo the sound to miserable things,
Which, knowing nought beyond their shallow senses
Worship the word which strikes their ear, and deem
Evil or good what is proclaimed to them
In their abasement. I will have none such:
Worship or worship not, thou shalt behold
The worlds beyond thy little world, nor be
Amerced for doubts beyond thy little life,
With torture of *my* dooming. There will come
An hour, when, tossed upon some water-drops,*
A man shall say to a man, “Believe in me,
And walk the waters;” and the man shall walk
The billows and be safe. *I* will not say,
Believe in *me*, as a conditional creed
To save thee; but fly with me o’er the gulf
Of space an equal flight, and I will show
What thou dar’st not deny, — the history
Of past, and present, and of future worlds.

Cain. Oh, god, or demon, or whate’er thou art,
Is yon our earth?

Lucifer. Dost thou not recognize
The dust which formed your father?

Cain. Can it be?
Yon small blue circle, swimming in far ether,

¹ [MS. — “An hour, when, walking on a petty lake.”]

With an inferior circlet near it still,
Which looks like that which lit our earthly night?
Is this our Paradise? Where are its walls,
And they who guard them?

Lucifer. Point me out the site
Of Paradise.

Cain. How should I? As we move
Like sunbeams onward, it grows small and smaller,
And as it waxes little, and then less,
Gathers a halo round it, like the light
Which shone the roundest of the stars, when I
Beheld them from the skirts of Paradise:
Methinks they both, as we recede from them,
Appear to join the innumerable stars
Which are around us; and, as we move on,
Increase their myriads.

Lucifer. And if there should be
Worlds greater than thine own, inhabited
By greater things, and they themselves far more
In number than the dust of thy dull earth,
Though multiplied to animated atoms,
All living, and all doomed to death, and wretched,
What wouldst thou think?

Cain. I should be proud of thought
Which knew such things.

Lucifer. But if that high thought were
Linked to a servile mass of matter, and,
Knowing such things, aspiring to such things,
And science still beyond them, were chained down
To the most gross and petty paltry wants,

All foul and fulsome, and the very best
Of thine enjoyments a sweet degradation,
A most enervating and filthy cheat
To lure thee on to the renewal of
Fresh souls and bodies, all foredoomed to be
As frail, and few so happy — *

* [It is nothing less than absurd to suppose, that Lucifer cannot well be expected to talk like an orthodox divine, and that the conversation of the first Rebel and the first Murderer was not likely to be very unexceptionable; or to plead the authority of Milton, or the authors of the old mysteries, for such offensive colloquies. The fact is, that *here* the whole argument — and a very *elaborate* † and specious argument it is — is directed against the goodness or the power of the Deity; and there is no answer so much as attempted to the offensive doctrines that are so strenuously inculcated. The Devil and his pupil have the field entirely to themselves, and are encountered with nothing but feeble obtestations and unreasoning horrors. Nor is this argumentative blasphemy a mere incidental deformity that arises in the course of an action directed to the common sympathies of our nature. It forms, on the contrary, the great staple of the piece, and occupies, we should think, not less than two thirds of it; so that it is really difficult to believe that it was written for any other purpose than to inculcate these doctrines; or, at least, to discuss the question upon which they bear. Now, we can certainly have no objection to Lord Byron writing an essay on the origin of evil, and sifting the whole of that vast and per-

† “What does Jeffrey mean by *elaborate*? Why! they were written as fast as I could put pen to paper, in the midst of evolutions, and revolutions, and persecutions, and proscriptions of all who interested me in Italy. They said the same of ‘Lara,’ which I wrote while undressing, after coming home from balls and masquerades. Of all I have ever written, they are perhaps the most carelessly composed; and their faults, whatever they may be, are those of negligence, and not of labor. I do not think this a merit, but it is a fact.” — *Byron's Letters*.

Cain. Spirit! I
Know nought of death, save as a dreadful thing
Of which I have heard my parents speak, as of
A hideous heritage I owe to them
No less than life; a heritage not happy,
If I may judge, till now. But, spirit! if
It be as thou hast said (and I within
Feel the prophetic torture of its truth),
Here let me die: for to give birth to those
Who can but suffer many years, and die,
Methinks is merely propagating death,
And multiplying murder.

Lucifer. Thou canst not
All die — there is what must survive.

Cain. The Other
Spake not of this unto my father, when
He shut him forth from Paradise, with death
Written upon his forehead. But at least
Let what is mortal of me perish, that
I may be in the rest as angels are.

Lucifer. I am angelic: wouldst thou be as I am?

Cain. I know not what thou art: I see thy power
And see thou show'st me things beyond *my* power,

plexing subject, with the force and the freedom that would be expected and allowed in a fair philosophical discussion; but we do not think it fair thus to argue it partially and *con amore*, in the name of Lucifer and Cain, without the responsibility or the liability to answer, that would attach to a philosophical disputant; and in a form which both doubles the danger, if the sentiments are pernicious, and almost precludes his opponents from the possibility of a reply. — JEFFREY.]

Beyond all power of my born faculties,
Although inferior still to my desires
And my conceptions.

Lucifer. What are they which dwell
So humbly in their pride, as to sojourn
With worms in clay?

Cain. And what art thou who dwellest
So haughtily in spirit, and canst range
Nature and immortality — and yet
Seem'st sorrowful?

Lucifer. I seem that which I am;
And therefore do I ask of thee, if thou
Wouldst be immortal?

Cain. Thou hast said, I must be
Immortal in despite of me. I knew not
This until lately — but since it must be,
Let me, or happy or unhappy, learn
To anticipate my immortality.

Lucifer. Thou didst before I came upon thee.

Cain. How?

Lucifer. By suffering.

Cain. And must torture be immortal?

Lucifer. We and thy sons will try. But now,
behold!

Is it not glorious?

Cain. Oh, thou beautiful
And unimaginable ether! and
Ye multiplying masses of increased
And still increasing lights! what are ye? what
Is this blue wilderness of interminable

Air, where ye roll along, as I have seen
The leaves along the limpid streams of Eden?
Is your course measured for ye? Or do ye
Sweep on in your unbounded revelry
Through an ærial universe of endless
Expansion — at which my soul aches to think —
Intoxicated with eternity?
Oh God! Oh Gods! or whatsoe'er ye are!
How beautiful ye are! how beautiful
Your works, or accidents, or whatsoe'er
They may be! Let me die, as atoms die,
(If that they die) or know ye in your might
And knowledge! My thoughts are not in this hour
Unworthy what I see, though my dust is;
Spirit! let me expire, or see them nearer. [earth!

Lucifer. Art thou not nearer? look back to thine

Cain. Where is it? I see nothing save a mass
Of most innumerable lights.

Lucifer. Look there!

Cain. I cannot see it.

Lucifer. Yet it sparkles still.

Cain. That! — yonder!

Lucifer. Yea.

Cain. And wilt thou tell me so?

Why, I have seen the fire-flies and fire-worms
Sprinkle the dusky groves and the green banks
In the dim twilight, brighter than yon world
Which bears them.

Lucifer. Thou hast seen both worms and worlds,
Each bright and sparkling — what dost think of them?

Cain. That they are beautiful in their own sphere
And that the night, which makes both beautiful,
The little shining fire-fly in its flight,
And the immortal star in its great course,
Must both be guided.

Lucifer. But by whom or what?

Cain. Show me.

Lucifer. Dar'st thou behold?

Cain. How know I what
I dare behold? As yet, thou hast shown nought
I dare not gaze on further.

Lucifer. On, then, with me.
Wouldst thou behold things mortal or immortal?

Cain. Why, what are things?

Lucifer. Both partly: but what doth
Sit next thy heart?

Cain. The things I see.

Lucifer. But what
Sate nearest it?

Cain. The things I have not seen,
Nor ever shall — the mysteries of death.

Lucifer. What, if I show to thee things which
have died,
As I have shown thee much which cannot die?

Cain. Do so.

Lucifer. Away, then! on our mighty wings.

Cain. Oh! how we cleave the blue! the stars fade
from us!

The earth! where is my earth? Let me look on it,
For I was made of it.

Lucifer. 'Tis now beyond thee,
Less, in the universe, than thou in it;
Yet deem not that thou canst escape it; thou
Shalt soon return to earth, and all its dust;
'Tis part of thy eternity, and mine.

Cain. Where dost thou lead me?

Lucifer. To what was before thee!
The phantasm of the world; of which thy world
Is but the wreck.

Cain. What! is it not then new?

Lucifer. No more than life is; and that was ere
thou

Or *I* were, or the things which seem to us
Greater than either: many things will have
No end; and some, which would pretend to have
Had no beginning, have had one as mean
As thou; and mightier things have been extinct
To make way for much meaner than we can
Surmise; for *moments* only and the *space*
Have been and must be all *unchangeable*.
But changes make not death, except to clay;
But thou art clay — and canst but comprehend
That which was clay, and such thou shalt behold.

Cain. Clay, spirit! what thou wilt, I can survey.

Lucifer. Away, then!

Cain. But the lights fade from me fast,
And some till now grew larger as we approached,
And wore the look of worlds.

Lucifer. And such they are.

Cain. And Edens in them?

Lucifer. It may be.

Cain. And men?

Lucifer. Yea, or things higher.

Cain. Ay? and serpents too?

Lucifer. Wouldst thou have men without them?
must no reptiles

Breathe, save the erect ones?

Cain. How the lights recede!

Where fly we?

Lucifer. To the world of phantoms, which
Are beings past, and shadows still to come.

Cain. But it grows dark, and dark — the stars are
gone!

Lucifer. And yet thou seest.

Cain. 'Tis a fearful light!

No sun, no moon, no lights innumerable.

The very blue of the empurpled night

Fades to a dreary twilight, yet I see

Huge dusky masses; but unlike the worlds

We were approaching, which, begirt with light,

Seemed full of life even when their atmosphere

Of light gave way, and showed them taking shapes

Unequal, of deep valleys and vast mountains;

And some emitting sparks, and some displaying

Enormous liquid plains, and some begirt

With luminous belts, and floating moons, which took,

Like them, the features of fair earth: — instead,

All here seems dark and dreadful.

Lucifer. But distinct.

Thou seekest to behold death, and dead things?

Cain. I seek it not; but as I know there are
Such, and that my sire's sin makes him and me,

And all that we inherit, liable
To such, I would behold at once, what I
Must one day see perforce.

Lucifer. Behold!

Cain. 'Tis darkness.

Lucifer. And so it shall be ever; but we will
Unfold its gates!

Cain. Enormous vapors roll
Apart — what's this?

Lucifer. Enter!

Cain. Can I return?

Lucifer. Return! be sure: how else should death
be peopled?

Its present realm is thin to what it will be,
Through thee and thine.

Cain. The clouds still open wide
And wider, and make widening circles round us.

Lucifer. Advance!

Cain. And thou!

Lucifer. Fear not — without me thou
Couldst not have gone beyond thy world. On! on!
[*They disappear through the clouds.*

SCENE II.

Hades.

Enter LUCIFER and CAIN.

Cain. How silent and how vast are these dim
worlds!

For they seem more than one, and yet more peopled
Than the huge brilliant luminous orbs which swung
So thickly in the upper air, that I
Had deemed them rather the bright populace
Of some all unimaginable Heaven,
Than things to be inhabited themselves,
But that on drawing near them I beheld
Their swelling into palpable immensity
Of matter, which seemed made for life to dwell on
Rather than life itself. But here, all is
So shadowy and so full of twilight, that
It speaks of a day past.

Lucifer. It is the realm
Of death. — Wouldst have it present?

Cain. Till I know
That which it really is, I cannot answer.
But if it be as I have heard my father
Deal out in his long homilies, 'tis a thing —
Oh God! I dare not think on't! Cursed be
He who invented life that leads to death!
Or the dull mass of life, that, being life,
Could not retain, but needs must forfeit it —
Even for the innocent!

Lucifer. Dost thou curse thy father?

Cain. Cursed he not me in giving me my birth?
Cursed he not me before my birth, in daring
To pluck the fruit forbidden?

Lucifer. Thou say'st well:
The curse is mutual 'twixt thy sire and thee —
But for thy sons and brother?

Cain. Let them share it
With me, their sire and brother! What else is
Bequeathed to me? I leave them my inheritance.
Oh, ye interminable gloomy realms
Of swimming shadows and enormous shapes,
Some fully shown, some indistinct, and all
Mighty and melancholy — what are ye?
Live ye, or have ye lived?

Lucifer. Somewhat of both.

Cain. Then what is death?

Lucifer. What? Hath not he who made ye
Said 'tis another life?

Cain. Till now he hath
Said nothing, save that all shall die.

Lucifer. Perhaps
He one day will unfold that further secret.

Cain. Happy the day!

Lucifer. Yes; happy! when unfolded,
Through agonies unspeakable, and clogged
With agonies eternal, to innumerable
Yet unborn myriads of unconscious atoms,
All to be animated for this only! [see

Cain. What are these mighty phantoms which I
Floating around me? — They wear not the form
Of the intelligences I have seen
Round our regretted and unentered Eden,
Nor wear the form of man as I have viewed it
In Adam's and in Abel's, and in mine,
Nor in my sister-brides, nor in my children's:
And yet they have an aspect, which, though not

Of men nor angels, looks like something, which
If not the last, rose higher than the first,
Haughty, and high, and beautiful, and full
Of seeming strength, but of inexplicable
Shape ; for I never saw such. They bear not
The wing of seraph, nor the face of man,
Nor form of mightiest brute, nor aught that is
Now breathing ; mighty yet and beautiful
As the most beautiful and mighty which
Live, and yet so unlike them, that I scarce
Can call them living.

Lucifer.

Yet they lived.

Cain.

Where ?

Lucifer.

Where

Thou livest.

Cain.

When ?

Lucifer.

On what thou callest earth

They did inhabit.

Cain.

Adam is the first.

[be

Lucifer. Of thine, I grant thee — but too mean to
The last of these.

Cain.

And what are they ?

Lucifer.

That which

Thou shalt be.

Cain.

But what *were* they ?

Lucifer.

Living, high,

Intelligent, good, great, and glorious things,
As much superior unto all thy sire,
Adam, could e'er have been in Edèn, as
The sixty-thousandth generation shall be,

In its dull damp degeneracy, to
Thee and thy son ; — and how weak they are, judge
By thy own flesh.

Cain. Ah me ! and did *they* perish ?

Lucifer. Yes, from their earth, as thou wilt fade
from thine.

Cain. But was *mine* theirs ?

Lucifer. It was.

Cain. But not as now.

It is too little and too lowly to
Sustain such creatures.*

Lucifer. True, it was more glorious.

Cain. And wherefore did it fall ?

Lucifer. Ask him who fells.

Cain. But how ?

Lucifer. By a most crushing and inexorable
Destruction and disorder of the elements,
Which struck a world to chaos, as a chaos

* [“ If, according to some speculations, you could prove the world many thousand years older than the Mosaic chronology — or if you could knock up Adam and Eve, and the Apple and Serpent — still, what is to be put up in their stead ? — or how is the difficulty removed ? Things must have had a beginning : and what matters it *when*, or *how* ? I sometimes think that man may be the relic of some higher material being wrecked in a former world, and degenerated in the hardship and struggle through chaos into conformity, or something like it — as we see Laplanders, Esquimaux, etc., inferior, in the present date, as the elements become more inexorable. But even then, this higher pre-Adamite supposititious creation must have had an origin and a Creator ; for a Creator is a more natural imagination than a fortuitous concourse of atoms : all things remount to a fountain, though they may flow to an ocean.” — *Byron's Diary*, 1821.]

Subsiding has struck out a world : such things,
Though rare in time, are frequent in eternity. —
Pass on, and gaze upon the past.

Cain. 'Tis awful!

Lucifer. And true. Behold these phantoms! they
were once
Material as thou art.

Cain. And must I be
Like them?

Lucifer. Let He who made thee answer that.
I show thee what thy predecessors are,
And what they *were* thou feelest, in degree
Inferior as thy petty feelings and
Thy pettier portion of the immortal part
Of high intelligence and earthly strength.
What ye in common have with what they had
Is life, and what ye *shall* have — death : the rest
Of your poor attributes is such as suits
Reptiles engendered out of the subsiding
Slime of a mighty universe, crushed into
A scarcely-yet shaped planet, peopled with
Things whose enjoyment was to be in blindness —
A Paradise of Ignorance, from which
Knowledge was barred as poison. But behold
What these superior beings are or were ;
Or, if it irk thee, turn thee back and till
The earth, thy task — I'll waft thee there in safety.

Cain. No : I'll stay here.

Lucifer. How long?

Cain. For ever! Since

I must one day return here from the earth,
I rather would remain ; I am sick of all
That dust has shown me — let me dwell in shadows.

Lucifer. It cannot be : thou now beholdest as
A vision that which is reality.
To make thyself fit for this dwelling, thou
Must pass through what the things thou see'st have
passed —
The gates of death.

Cain. By what gate have we entered
Even now ?

Lucifer. By mine ! But, plighted to return,
My spirit buoys thee up to breathe in regions
Where all is breathless save thyself. Gaze on,
But do not think to dwell here till thine hour
Is come.

Cain. And these, too ; can they ne'er repass
To earth again ?

Lucifer. *Their* earth is gone for ever —
So changed by its convulsion, they would not
Be conscious to a single present spot
Of its new scarcely hardened surface — 't was —
Oh, what a beautiful world it *was* ! *

* [Mr. Gifford having, through Mr. Murray, suggested the propriety of omitting a portion of this dialogue, Byron replied : —
“ The two passages cannot be altered without making Lucifer talk like the Bishop of London, which would not be in the character of the former. The notion is from Cuvier (that of the *old worlds*). The other passage is also in character ; if *nonsense*, so much the better, because then it can do no harm ; and the sillier Satan is made, the safer for everybody. As to ‘alarms,’ etc.,

Cain.

And is.

It is not with the earth, though I must till it,
I feel at war, but that I may not profit
By what it bears of beautiful, untoiling,
Nor gratify my thousand swelling thoughts
With knowledge, nor allay my thousand fears
Of death and life.

Lucifer. What thy world is, thou see'st,
But canst not comprehend the shadow of
That which it was.

Cain. And those enormous creatures,
Phantoms inferior in intelligence

do you really think such things ever led anybody astray? Are these people more impious than Milton's Satan? or the Prometheus of Æschylus? or even than the 'Sadducees,' the 'Fall of Jerusalem' of Milman, etc.? Are not Adam, Eve, Adah, and Abel, as pious as the Catechism? Gifford is too wise a man to think that such things can have any serious effect: who was ever altered by a poem? I beg leave to observe, that there is no creed or personal hypothesis of mine in all this; but I was obliged to make Cain and Lucifer talk consistently, and surely this has always been permitted to poesy. Cain is a proud man: if Lucifer promised him kingdom, etc., it would *elate* him: the object of the demon is to *depress* him still further in his own estimation than he was before, by showing him infinite things and his own abasement, till he falls into the frame of mind that leads to the catastrophe, from mere *internal* irritation, not premeditation, or envy of *Abel* (which would have made him contemptible), but from rage and fury against the inadequacy of his state to his conceptions, and which discharges itself rather against life, and the Author of life, than the mere living. His subsequent remorse is the natural effect of looking on his sudden deed. Had the deed been *premeditated*, his repentance would have been tardier."]

(At least so seeming) to the things we have passed,
Resembling somewhat the wild habitants
Of the deep woods of earth, the hugest which
Roar nightly in the forest, but ten-fold
In magnitude and terror; taller than
The cherub-guarded walls of Eden, with
Eyes flashing like the fiery swords which fence them,
And tusks projecting like the trees stripped of
Their bark and branches — what were they?

Lucifer. That which
The Mammoth is in thy world; — but these lie
By myriads underneath its surface.

Cain. But
None on it?

Lucifer. No: for thy frail race to war
With them would render the curse on it useless —
'T would be destroyed so early.

Cain. But why *war*?

Lucifer. You have forgotten the denunciation
Which drove your race from Eden — war with all
things,
And death to all things, and disease to most things,
And pangs, and bitterness; these were the fruits
Of the forbidden tree.

Cain. But animals —
Did they, too, eat of it, that they must die? [you,

Lucifer. Your Maker told ye, *they* were made for
As you for him. — You would not have their doom
Superior to your own? Had Adam not
Fallen, all had stood.

Cain. Alas ! the hopeless wretches !
They too must share my sire's fate, like his sons ;
Like them, too, without having shared the apple ;
Like them, too, without the so dear-bought *knowl-*
edge !

It was a lying tree — for we *know* nothing.
At least it *promised knowledge* at the *price*
Of death — but *knowledge* still : but what *knows* man ?

Lucifer. It may be death leads to the *highest*
knowledge ;
And being of all things the sole thing certain,
At least leads to the *surest* science : therefore
The tree was true, though deadly.

Cain. These dim realms !
I see them, but I know them not.

Lucifer. Because
Thy hour is yet afar, and matter cannot
Comprehend spirit wholly — but 't is something
To know there are such realms.

Cain. We knew already
That there was death.

Lucifer. But not what was beyond it.

Cain. Nor know I now.

Lucifer. Thou knowest that there is
A state, and many states beyond thine own —
And this thou knewest not this morn.

Cain. But all
Seems dim and shadowy.

Lucifer. Be content ; it will
Seem clearer to thine immortality.

Cain. And yon immeasurable liquid space
Of glorious azure which floats on beyond us,
Which looks like water, and which I should deem
The river which flows out of Paradise
Past my own dwelling, but that it is bankless
And boundless, and of an ethereal hue —
What is it?

Lucifer. There is still some such on earth,
Although inferior, and thy children shall
Dwell near it — 't is the phantasm of an ocean.

Cain. 'T is like another world ; a liquid sun —
And those inordinate creatures sporting o'er
Its shining surface ?

Lucifer. Are its habitants,
The past leviathans.

Cain. And yon immense
Serpent, which rears his dripping mane and vasty
Head ten times higher than the haughtiest cedar
Forth from the abyss, looking as he could coil
Himself around the orbs we lately looked on —
Is he not of the kind which basked beneath
The tree in Eden ?

Lucifer. Eve, thy mother, best
Can tell what shape of serpent tempted her.

Cain. This seems too terrible. No doubt the other
Had more of beauty.

Lucifer. Hast thou ne'er beheld him ?

Cain. Many of the same kind (at least so called),
But never that precisely which persuaded
The fatal fruit, nor even of the same aspect.

Lucifer. Your father saw him not?

Cain. No: 't was my mother
Who tempted him — she tempted by the serpent.

Lucifer. Good man! whene'er thy wife, or thy sons'
wives,
Tempt thee or them to aught that's new or strange,
Be sure thou see'st first who hath tempted *them*.

Cain. Thy precept comes too late: there is no more
For serpents to tempt woman to.

Lucifer. But there
Are some things still which woman may tempt man to,
And man tempt woman: — let thy sons look to it!
My counsel is a kind one; for 'tis even
Given chiefly at my own expense; 'tis true,
'T will not be followed, so there's little lost.

Cain. I understand not this.

Lucifer. The happier thou! —
Thy world and thou are still too young! Thou thinkest
Thyself most wicked and unhappy: is it
Not so?

Cain. For crime, I know not; but for pain,
I have felt much.

Lucifer. First-born of the first man!
Thy present state of sin — and thou art evil,
Of sorrow — and thou sufferest, are both Eden
In all its innocence compared to what
Thou shortly may'st be; and that state again,
In its redoubled wretchedness, a Paradise
To what thy sons' sons' sons, accumulating
In generations like to dust (which they

In fact but add to), shall endure and do. —
Now let us back to earth !

Cain. And wherefore didst thou
Lead me here only to inform me this ?

Lucifer. Was not thy quest for knowledge ?

Cain. Yes : as being
The road to happiness.

Lucifer. If truth be so,
Thou hast it.

Cain. Then my father's God did well
When he prohibited the fatal tree.

Lucifer. But had done better in not planting it.
But ignorance of evil doth not save
From evil ; it must still roll on the same,
A part of all things.

Cain. Not of all things. No :
I'll not believe it — for I thirst for good. [evil

Lucifer. And who and what doth not ? *Who* covets
For its own bitter sake ? — *None* — nothing ! 't is
The leaven of all life, and lifelessness.

Cain. Within those glorious orbs which we behold,
Distant and dazzling, and innumerable,
Ere we came down into this phantom realm,
Ill cannot come : they are too beautiful.

Lucifer. Thou hast seen them from afar —

Cain. And what of that ?
Distance can but diminish glory — they,
When nearer, must be more ineffable. [tiful.

Lucifer. Approach the things of earth most beau-
And judge their beauty near.

Cain. I have done this —
The loveliest thing I know is loveliest nearest.

Lucifer. Then there must be delusion. — What
is that,
Which being nearest to thine eyes is still
More beautiful than beauteous things remote?

Cain. My sister Adah. — All the stars of heaven,
The deep blue noon of night, lit by an orb
Which looks a spirit, or a spirit's world —
The hues of twilight — the sun's gorgeous coming —
His setting indescribable, which fills
My eyes with pleasant tears as I behold
Him sink, and feel my heart float softly with him
Along that western paradise of clouds —
The forest shade — the green bough — the bird's
voice —

The vesper bird's, which seems to sing of love,
And mingles with the song of cherubim,
As the day closes over Eden's walls; —
All these are nothing, to my eyes and heart,
Like Adah's face: I turn from earth and heaven
To gaze on it.

Lucifer. 'Tis fair as frail mortality,
In the first dawn and bloom of young creation
And earliest embraces of earth's parents,
Can make its offspring; still it is delusion.

Cain. You think so, being not her brother.

Lucifer. Mortal!
My brotherhood's with those who have no children.

Cain. Then thou canst have no fellowship with us.

Lucifer. It may be that thine own shall be for me.
But if thou dost possess a beautiful
Being beyond all beauty in thine eyes,
Why art thou wretched?

Cain. Why do I exist?
Why art *thou* wretched? why are all things so?
Ev'n he who made us must be, as the maker
Of things unhappy! To produce destruction
Can surely never be the task of joy,
And yet my sire says he's omnipotent:
Then why is evil — he being good? I asked
This question of my father; and he said,
Because this evil only was the path
To good. Strange good, that must arise from out
Its deadly opposite.* I lately saw
A lamb stung by a reptile: the poor suckling
Lay foaming on the earth, beneath the vain
And piteous bleating of its restless dam;
My father plucked some herbs, and laid them to
The wound; and by degrees the helpless wretch
Resumed its careless life, and rose to drain

* ["God Almighty!
There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
Would men observingly distil it out;
For our bad neighbors make us early stirrers,
Which is both healthful and good husbandry;
Besides, they are our outward consciences,
And preachers to us all; admonishing,
That we should dress us fairly for our end
Thus may we gather honey from the weed,
And make a moral of the devil himself." — SHAKSPEARE.]

Cain. But dost thou not love something like thyself?

Lucifer. And dost thou love *thyself*?

Cain. Yes, but love more
What makes my feelings more endurable,
And is more than myself, because I love it.

Lucifer. Thou lovest it, because 'tis beautiful,
As was the apple in thy mother's eye;
And when it ceases to be so, thy love
Will cease, like any other appetite.

Cain. Cease to be beautiful! how can that be?

Lucifer. With time.

Cain. But time has past, and hitherto
Even Adam and my mother both are fair:
Not fair like Adah and the seraphim —
But very fair.

Lucifer. All that must pass away
In them and her.

Cain. I'm sorry for it; but
Cannot conceive my love for her the less.
And when her beauty disappears, methinks
He who creates all beauty will lose more
Than me in seeing perish such a work.

Lucifer. I pity thee who lovest what must perish.

Cain. And I thee who lov'st nothing.

Lucifer. And thy brother —
Sits he not near thy heart?

Cain. Why should he not?

Lucifer. Thy father loves him well — so does thy
God.

Cain. And so do I.

Lucifer. 'Tis well and meekly done.

Cain. Meekly!

Lucifer. He is the second born of flesh,
And is his mother's favorite.

Cain. Let him keep
Her favor, since the serpent was the first
To win it.

Lucifer. And his father's?

Cain. What is that
To me? should I not love that which all love?

Lucifer. And the Jehovah — the indulgent Lord,
And bounteous planter of barred Paradise —
He, too, looks smilingly on Abel.

Cain.
Ne'er saw him, and I know not if he smiles.

Lucifer. But you have seen his angels.

Cain. Rarely.

Lucifer. But
Sufficiently to see they love your brother:
His sacrifices are acceptable.

Cain. So be they! wherefore speak to me of this?

Lucifer. Because thou hast thought of this ere now.

Cain. And if
I have thought, why recall a thought that —— (*he*
pauses, as agitated) — Spirit!

Here we are in *thy* world; speak not of *mine*.

Thou hast shown me wonders; thou hast shown me
those

Mighty pre-Adamites who walked the earth

Of which ours is the wreck ; thou hast pointed out
Myriads of starry worlds, of which our own
Is the dim and remote companion, in
Infinity of life : thou hast shown me shadows
Of that existence with the dreaded name
Which my sire brought us — Death ;* thou hast
shown me much —

But not all : show me where Jehovah dwells,
In his especial Paradise — or *thine* :
Where is it?

Lucifer. *Here, and o'er all space.*

Cain.

But ye

Have some allotted dwelling — as all things ;
Clay has its earth, and other worlds their tenants ;
All temporary breathing creatures their
Peculiar element ; and things which have
Long ceased to breathe *our* breath, have theirs,
thou say'st ;

And the Jehovah and thyself have thine —
Ye do not dwell together?

Lucifer. No, we reign

Together; but our dwellings are asunder. [chance

Cain. Would there were only one of ye! per-
An unity of purpose might make union
In elements which seem now jarred in storms.
How came ye, being spirits, wise and infinite,
To separate? Are ye not as brethren in
Your essence, and your nature, and your glory?

* [MS. — "Which my sire shrinks from — Death."]

Lucifer. Art thou not Abel's brother?

Cain. We are brethren,
And so we shall remain; but were it not so,
Is spirit like to flesh? can it fall out?
Infinity with Immortality?
Jarring and turning space to misery —
For what?

Lucifer. To reign.

Cain. Did ye not tell me that
Ye are both eternal?

Lucifer. Yea!

Cain. And what I have seen,
Yon blue immensity, is boundless?

Lucifer. Ay.

Cain. And cannot ye both *reign* then? — is there
not
Enough? — why should ye differ?

Lucifer. We *both* reign.

Cain. But one of you makes evil.

Lucifer. Which?

Cain. Thou! for
If thou canst do man good, why dost thou not?

Lucifer. And why not he who made? *I* made ye
not;

Ye are *his* creatures, and not mine

Cain. Then leave us
His creatures, as thou say'st we are, or show me
Thy dwelling, or *his* dwelling.

Lucifer. I could show thee

Both; but the time will come thou shalt see one
Of them for evermore.*

Cain. And why not now?

Lucifer. Thy human mind hath scarcely grasp to
gather

The little I have shown thee into calm
And clear thought; and *thou* wouldst go on aspiring
To the great double Mysteries! the *two Principles*!
And gaze upon them on their secret thrones!
Dust! limit thy ambition; for to see
Either of these, would be for thee to perish!

Cain. And let me perish, so I see them!

Lucifer. There
The son of her who snatched the apple spake!
But thou wouldst only perish, and not see them;
That sight is for the other state.

Cain. Of death?

Lucifer. That is the prelude.

Cain. Then I dread it less,
Now that I know it leads to something definite.

Lucifer. And now I will convey thee to thy world,
Where thou shalt multiply the race of Adam,
Eat, drink, toil, tremble, laugh, weep, sleep, and die.

Cain. And to what end have I beheld these things
Which thou hast shown me?

* [In Byron's Diary for January 28, 1821, is the following entry. —

“*Thought for a speech of Lucifer, in the Tragedy of Cain.*

‘Were *Death* an *evil*, would *I* let thee *live*?

Fool! live as I live — as thy father lives,

And thy sons’ sons shall live for evermore!’”]

Lucifer. Didst thou not require
Knowledge? And have I not, in what I showed,
Taught thee to know thyself?

Cain. Alas! I seem
Nothing.

Lucifer. And this should be the human sum
Of knowledge, to know mortal nature's nothingness;
Bequeathe that science to thy children, and
'Twill spare them many tortures.

Cain. Haughty spirit!
Thou speak'st it proudly; but thyself, though proud,
Hast a superior.

Lucifer. No! By heaven, which He
Holds, and the abyss, and the immensity
Of worlds and life, which I hold with him — No!
I have a victor — true; but no superior.
Homage he has from all — but none from me:
I battle it against him, as I battled
In highest heaven. Through all eternity,
And the unfathomable gulfs of Hades,
And the interminable realms of space,
And the infinity of endless ages,
All, all, will I dispute! And world by world,
And star by star, and universe by universe,
Shall tremble in the balance, till the great
Conflict shall cease, if ever it shall cease,
Which it ne'er shall, till he or I be quenched!
And what can quench our immortality,
Or mutual and irrevocable hate?
He as a conqueror will call the conquered

Evil; but what will be the *good* he gives?
Were I the victor, *his* works would be deemed
The only evil ones. And you, ye new
And scarce-born mortals, what have been his gifts
To you already, in your little world?

Cain. But few; and some of those but bitter.

Lucifer.

Back

With me, then, to thine earth, and try the rest
Of his celestial boons to you and yours.

Evil and good are things in their own essence,
And not made good or evil by the giver;
But if he gives you good — so call him; if
Evil springs from *him*, do not name it *mine*,
Till ye know better its true fount; and judge
Not by words, though of spirits, but the fruits
Of your existence, such as it must be.

One good gift has the fatal apple given —
Your *reason*: — let it not be over-swayed
By tyrannous threats to force you into faith
'Gainst all external sense and inward feeling:
Think and endure, — and form an inner world
In your own bosom — where the outward fails;
So shall you nearer be the spiritual
Nature, and war triumphant with your own.*

[*They disappear.*

* [As to the question of the origin of evil, which is the burden of this misdirected verse, Lord Byron has neither thrown any new light upon it, nor darkened the previous knowledge which we possessed. It remains just where it was, in its mighty, unfathomed obscurity. His Lordship may, it is true, have recapitulated some of the arguments with a more concise and cavalier

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The Earth, near Eden, as in Act I.

Enter CAIN and ADAH.

Adah. Hush! tread softly, Cain.

Cain. I will; but wherefore?

Adah. Our little Enoch sleeps upon yon bed
Of leaves, beneath the cypress.

Cain. Cypress! 'tis
A gloomy tree, which looks as if it mourned

air than the old schoolmen or fathers; but the result is the same. There is no poetical road to metaphysics. In one view, however, which our rhapsodist has taken of the subject, we conceive he has done well. He represents the temptations held out to Cain by Satan, as constantly succeeding and corresponding to some previous discontent and gloomy disposition in his own mind; so that Lucifer is little more than the personified demon of his imagination: and further, the acts of guilt and folly into which Cain is hurried are not treated as accidental, or as occasioned by passing causes, but as springing from an internal fury, a morbid state akin to phrensy, a mind dissatisfied with itself and all things, and haunted by an insatiable, stubborn longing after knowledge rather than happiness, and a fatal proneness to dwell on the evil side of things rather than the good. We here see the dreadful consequences of not curbing this disposition (which is, after all, perhaps, the sin that most easily besets humanity), exemplified in a striking point of view; and we so far think, that the moral to be derived from a perusal of this Mystery is a valuable one. —
JEFFREY.]

O'er what it shadows; wherefore didst thou choose it
For our child's canopy?

Adah. Because its branches
Shut out the sun like night, and therefore seemed
Fitting to shadow slumber.

Cain. Ay, the last —
And longest; but no matter — lead me to him.
[*They go up to the child.*

How lovely he appears! his little cheeks,
In their pure incarnation, vying with
The rose leaves strewn beneath them.

Adah. And his lips, too,
How beautifully parted! No; you shall not
Kiss him, at least not now: he will awake soon —
His hour of mid-day rest is nearly over;
But it were pity to disturb him till
'Tis closed.

Cain. You have said well; I will contain [on
My heart till then. He smiles, and sleeps! — Sleep
And smile, thou little, young inheritor
Of a world scarce less young: sleep on, and smile!
Thine are the hours and days when both are cheering
And innocent! *thou* hast not plucked the fruit —
Thou know'st not thou art naked! Must the time
Come thou shalt be amerced for sins unknown,
Which were not thine nor mine? But now sleep on!
His cheeks are reddening into deeper smiles,
And shining lids are trembling o'er his long
Lashes, dark as the cypress which waves o'er them;
Half open, from beneath them the clear blue

Laughs out, although in slumber. He must dream —
Of what? Of Paradise! — Ay! dream of it,
My disinherited boy! 'Tis but a dream;
For never more thyself, thy sons, nor fathers,
Shall walk in that forbidden place of joy! *

Adah. Dear Cain! Nay, do not whisper o'er our
son

Such melancholy yearnings o'er the past:
Why wilt thou always mourn for Paradise?
Can we not make another?

Cain.

Where?

Adah.

Here, or

Where'er thou wilt: where'er thou art, I feel not
The want of this so much regretted Eden.
Have I not thee, our boy, our sire, and brother,
And Zillah — our sweet sister, and our Eve,
To whom we owe so much besides our birth?

Cain. Yes — death, too, is amongst the debts we
owe her.

Adah. Cain! that proud spirit, who withdrew
thee hence,

Hath saddened thine still deeper. I had hoped
The promised wonders which thou hast beheld,
Visions, thou say'st, of past and present worlds,
Would have composed thy mind into the calm
Of a contented knowledge; but I see

* [The censorious may say what they will, but there are speeches in the mouth of Cain and Adah, especially regarding their child, which nothing in English poetry but the "wood-notes wild" of Shakspeare ever equalled. — SIR EGERTON BRYDGES.]

Thy guide hath done thee evil: still I thank him,
And can forgive him all, that he so soon
Hath given thee back to us.

Cain.

So soon?

Adah.

'Tis scarcely

Two hours since ye departed: two *long* hours
To *me*, but only *hours* upon the sun.

Cain. And yet I have approached that sun, and
seen

Worlds which he once shone on, and never more
Shall light; and worlds he never lit: methought
Years had rolled o'er my absence.

Adah.

Hardly hours.

Cain. The mind then hath capacity of time,
And measures it by that which it beholds,
Pleasing or painful; little or almighty.
I had beheld the immemorial works
Of endless beings; * skirred extinguished worlds;
And, gazing on eternity, methought
I had borrowed more by a few drops of ages
From its immensity: but now I feel
My littleness again. Well said the spirit,
That I was nothing!

Adah.

Wherefore said he so?

Jehovah said not that.

Cain.

No: *he* contents him

With making us the *nothing* which we are;
And after flattering dust with glimpses of

* [MS. — "I had beheld the works of ages and
Immortal beings."]

Eden and Immortality, resolves
It back to dust again — for what?

Adah. Thou know'st —
Even for our parents' error.

Cain. What is that
To us? they sinned, then *let them* die! [thought

Adah. Thou hast not spoken well, nor is that
Thy own, but of the spirit who was with thee.
Would *I* could die for them, so *they* might live!

Cain. Why, so say I — provided that one victim
Might satiate the insatiable of life,
And that our little rosy sleeper there
Might never taste of death nor human sorrow,
Nor hand it down to those who spring from him.

Adah. How know we that some such atonement
one day
May not redeem our race?

Cain. By sacrificing
The harmless for the guilty? what atonement
Were there? why, *we* are innocent: what have we
Done, that we must be victims for a deed
Before our birth, or need have victims to
Atone for this mysterious, nameless sin —
If it be such a sin to seek for knowledge?

Adah. Alas! thou sinnest now, my Cain: thy
words
Sound impious in mine ears.

Cain. Then leave me!

Adah. Never,
Though thy God left thee.

Cain. Say, what have we here?

Adah. Two altars, which our brother Abel made
During thine absence, whereupon to offer
A sacrifice to God on thy return.

Cain. And how knew *he*, that *I* would be so ready
With the burnt offerings, which he daily brings
With a meek brow, whose base humility
Shows more of fear than worship, as a bribe
To the Creator?

Adah. Surely, 'tis well done.

Cain. One altar may suffice; *I* have no offering.

Adah. The fruits of the earth, the early, beautiful
Blossom and bud, and bloom of flowers, and fruits;
These are a goodly offering to the Lord,
Given with a gentle and a contrite spirit.

Cain. I have toiled, and tilled, and sweaten in
the sun

According to the curse: — must I do more?
For what should I be gentle? for a war
With all the elements ere they will yield
The bread we eat? For what must I be grateful?
For being dust, and grovelling in the dust,
Till I return to dust? If I am nothing —
For nothing shall I be an hypocrite,
And seem well-pleased with pain? For what should I
Be contrite? for my father's sin, already
Expiate with what we all have undergone,
And to be more than expiated by
The ages prophesied, upon our seed.
Little deems our young blooming sleeper, there,

The germs of an eternal misery
To myriads is within him ! better 't were
I snatched him in his sleep, and dashed him 'gainst
The rocks, than let him live to ——

Adah. Oh, my God !

Touch not the child — my child ! *thy* child ! Oh Cain !

Cain. Fear not ! for all the stars, and all the
power

Which sways them, I would not accost yon infant
With ruder greeting than a father's kiss.

Adah. Then, why so awful in thy speech ?

Cain. I said.

'T were better that he ceased to live, than give
Life to so much of sorrow as he must
Endure, and, harder still, bequeathe ; but since
That saying jars you, let us only say —
'T were better that he never had been born.

Adah. Oh, do not say so ! Where were then the
joys,

The mother's joys of watching, nourishing,
And loving him ? Soft ! he awakes. Sweet Enoch !

[*She goes to the child.*]

Oh Cain ! look on him ; see how full of life,
Of strength, of bloom, of beauty, and of joy,
How like to me — how like to thee, when gentle,
For *then* we are *all* alike ; is't not so, Cain ?
Mother, and sire, and son, our features are
Reflected in each other ; as they are
In the clear waters, when *they* are *gentle*, and
When *thou* art *gentle*. Love us, then, my Cain !

And love thyself for our sakes, for we love thee.
Look! how he laughs and stretches out his arms,
And opens wide his blue eyes upon thine,
To hail his father; while his little form
Flutters as winged with joy. Talk not of pain!
The childless cherubs well might envy thee
The pleasures of a parent! Bless him, Cain!
As yet he hath no words to thank thee, but
His heart will, and thine own too.*

Cain.

Bless thee, boy!

If that a mortal blessing may avail thee,
To save thee from the serpent's curse!

Adah.

It shall.

Surely a father's blessing may avert
A reptile's subtlety.

Cain.

Of that I doubt;

But bless him ne'er the less.

Adah.

Our brother comes.

Cain. Thy brother Abel.*Enter ABEL.**Abel.*

Welcome, Cain! My brother.

The peace of God be on thee!

* [The third act shows us Cain gloomily lamenting over the future fortunes of his infant son, and withstanding all the consolation and entreaties of Adah, who is anxious to soften him to the task of submission and to a participation in the sacrifice which his brother is about to offer. Here are some passages of no common beauty. That which strikes us most is when the parents are hanging over their sleeping boy.—BISHOP HEBER,]

Cain. Abel, hail!

Abel. Our sister tells me that thou hast been
wandering,

In high communion with a spirit, far
Beyond our wonted range. Was he of those
We have seen and spoken with, like to our father?

Cain. No.

Abel. Why then commune with him? he may be
A foe to the Most High.

Cain. And friend to man.
Has the Most High been so — if so you term him?

Abel. *Term him!* your words are strange to-day,
my brother.

My sister Adah, leave us for awhile —
We mean to sacrifice.

Adah. Farewell, my Cain;
But first embrace thy son. May his soft spirit,
And Abel's pious ministry, recall thee
To peace and holiness!

[*Exit ADAH, with her child.*]

Abel. Where hast thou been?

Cain. I know not.

Abel. Nor what thou hast seen?

Cain. The dead,
The immortal, the unbounded, the omnipotent,
The overpowering mysteries of space —
The innumerable worlds that were and are —
A whirlwind of such overwhelming things,
Suns, moons, and earths, upon their loud-voiced
spheres

Singing in thunder round me, as have made me
Unfit for mortal converse : leave me, Abel.

Abel. Thine eyes are flashing with unnatural
light —

Thy cheek is flushed with an unnatural hue —
Thy words are fraught with an unnatural sound —
What may this mean ?

Cain. It means — I pray thee, leave me.

Abel. Not till we have prayed and sacrificed together.

Cain. Abel, I pray thee, sacrifice alone —
Jehovah loves thee well.

Abel. *Both* well, I hope.

Cain. But thee the better : I care not for that :
Thou art fitter for his worship than I am ;
Revere him, then — but let it be alone —
At least, without me.

Abel. Brother, I should ill
Deserve the name of our great father's son,
If, as my elder, I revered thee not,
And in the worship of our God called not
On thee to join me, and precede me in
Our priesthood — 'tis thy place.

Cain. But I have ne'er
Asserted it.

Abel. The more my grief ; I pray thee
To do so now : thy soul seems laboring in
Some strong delusion ; it will calm thee.

Cain. No ;
Nothing can calm me more. *Calm !* say I ? Never

Knew I what calm was in the soul, although
I have seen the elements stilled. My Abel, leave
me!

Or let me leave thee to thy pious purpose.

Abel. Neither; we must perform our task together.
Spurn me not.

Cain. If it must be so —— well, then,
What shall I do?

Abel. Choose one of those two altars.

Cain. Choose for me: they to me are so much
turf

And stone.

Abel. Choose thou!

Cain. I have chosen.

Abel. 'Tis the highest,
And suits thee, as the elder. Now prepare
Thine offerings.

Cain. Where are thine?

Abel. Behold them here —
The firstlings of the flock, and fat thereof —
A shepherd's humble offering.

Cain. I have no flocks;
I am a tiller of the ground, and must
Yield what it yieldeth to my toil — its fruit:
[*He gathers fruits.*

Behold them in their various bloom and ripeness.

[*They dress their altars, and kindle a flame
upon them.*

Abel. My brother, as the elder, offer first
Thy prayer and thanksgiving with sacrifice.

Cain. No — I am new to this; lead thou the way,
And I will follow — as I may.

Abel (kneeling). Oh God!
Who made us, and who breathed the breath of life
Within our nostrils, who hath blessed us,
And spared, despite our father's sin, to make *
His children all lost, as they might have been,
Had not thy justice been so tempered with
The mercy which is thy delight, as to
Accord a pardon like a Paradise, [light!
Compared with our great crimes: — Sole Lord of
Of good, and glory, and eternity;
Without whom all were evil, and with whom
Nothing can err, except to some good end
Of thine omnipotent benevolence —
Inscrutable, but still to be fulfilled —
Accept from out thy humble first of shepherd's
First of the first-born flocks — an offering,
In itself nothing — as what offering can be
Aught unto thee? — but yet accept it for
The thanksgiving of him who spreads it in
The face of thy high heaven, bowing his own
Even to the dust, of which he is, in honor
Of thee, and of thy name, for evermore!

Cain (standing erect during this speech). Spirit!
whate'er or whosoe'er thou art,
Omnipotent, it may be — and, if good,

* [MS. — “And despised not for our father's sin to make.”]

Shown in the exemption of thy deeds from evil;
Jehovah upon earth! and God in heaven!
And it may be with other names, because
Thine attributes seem many, as thy works:—
If thou must be propitiated with prayers,
Take them! If thou must be induced with altar
And softened with a sacrifice, receive them!
Two beings here erect them unto thee.
If thou lov'st blood, the shepherd's shrine, w
smokes

On my right hand, hath shed it for thy service
In the first of his flock, whose limbs now reek
In sanguinary incense to thy skies;
Or if the sweet and blooming fruits of earth,
And milder seasons, which the unstained turf
I spread them on now offers in the face
Of the broad sun which ripened them, may seem
Good to thee, inasmuch as they have not
Suffered in limb or life, and rather form
A sample of thy works, than supplication
To look on ours! If a shrine without victim,
And altar without gore, may win thy favor,
Look on it! and for him who dresseth it,
He is—such as thou madest him; and seeks nothing
Which must be won by kneeling: if he's evil,
Strike him! thou art omnipotent, and may'st—
For what can he oppose? If he be good,
Strike him, or spare him, as thou wilt! since all
Rests upon thee; and good and evil seem

To have no power themselves, save in thy will ;
And whether that be good or ill I know not,
Not being omnipotent, nor fit to judge
Omnipotence, but merely to endure
Its mandate ; which thus far I have endured.

[*The fire upon the altar of ABEL kindles into a column of the brightest flame, and ascends to heaven ; while a whirlwind throws down the altar of CAIN, and scatters the fruits abroad upon the earth.*

Abel (kneeling). Oh, brother, pray ! Jehovah's
wroth with thee.

Cain. Why so ?

Abel. Thy fruits are scattered on the earth.

Cain. From earth they came, to earth let them
return ;

Their seed will bear fresh fruit there ere the summer.
Thy burnt flesh-offering prospers better ; see
How heaven licks up the flames, when thick with
blood !

Abel. Think not upon my offering's acceptance,
But make another of thine own before
It is too late.

Cain. I will build no more altars,
Nor suffer any. —

Abel (rising). Cain ! what meanest thou ?

Cain. To cast down yon vile flatterer of the clouds,
The smoky harbinger of thy dull prayers —
Thine altar, with its blood of lambs and kids,
Which fed on milk, to be destroyed in blood.

Abel (opposing him). Thou shalt not: — add not
impious works to impious
Words! let that altar stand — 'tis hallowed now
By the immortal pleasure of Jehovah,
In his acceptance of the victims.

Cain.

His!

His pleasure! what was his high pleasure in
The fumes of scorching flesh and smoking blood
To the pain of the bleating mothers, which
Still yearn for their dead offspring? or the pangs
Of the sad ignorant victims underneath
Thy pious knife? Give way! this bloody record
Shall not stand in the sun, to shame creation!

Abel. Brother, give back! thou shalt not touch my
altar

With violence: if that thou wilt adopt it,
To try another sacrifice, 'tis thine.

Cain. Another sacrifice! Give way, or else
That sacrifice may be —

Abel.

What mean'st thou?

Cain.

Give —

Give way! — thy God loves blood! — then look to
it: —

Give way, ere he hath *more!*

Abel.

In *his* great name,
I stand between thee and the shrine which hath
Had his acceptance.

Cain.

If thou lov'st thyself,
Stand back till I have strewed this turf along
Its native soil: — else —

Abel (opposing him). I love God far more
Than life.*

*Cain (striking him with a brand, on the temples,
which he snatches from the altar).* Then
take thy life unto thy God,
Since he loves lives.

Abel (falls). What hast thou done, my brother?

Cain. Brother!

Abel. Oh, God! receive thy servant, and
Forgive his slayer, for he knew not what
He did. — Cain, give me — give me thy hand; and tell
Poor Zillah —

Cain (after a moment's stupefaction). My hand!
'tis all red, and with —
What?

[*A long pause. — Looking slowly round.*
Where am I? alone! Where's Abel? where
Cain? Can it be that I am he? My brother,
Awake! — why liest thou so on the green earth?
'Tis not the hour of slumber: — why so pale?
What, hast thou! — thou wert full of life this morn!

* [It is evident that Lord Byron had studied his subject very deeply; and, though he has varied a little from, or gone a little beyond, the letter of Scripture, which is very concise, yet he has apparently entered with great exactness into the minds of Cain and Abel in this most interesting scene: and were it allowable to ascribe to the author of a dramatic work the principles or feelings of all or any of his characters, except as adopting them for his particular purpose, one would be at a loss to say, whether Lord Byron ought most to be identified with Cain, or with Abel: so appropriately has he maintained the character of each. — GRANT'S "*Notes on Cain*," p. 401.]

Abel! I pray thee, mock me not! I smote
Too fiercely, but not fatally. Ah, why *
Wouldst thou oppose me? This is mockery;
And only done to daunt me:—'t was a blow—
And but a blow. Stir—stir—nay, only stir!
Why, so—that's well!—thou breath'st! breathe
upon me!

Oh, God! Oh, God!

Abel (very faintly). What's he who speaks of God?

Cain. Thy murderer.

Abel. Then may God forgive him! Cain,
Comfort poor Zillah:—she has but one brother
Now. [ABEL *dies.*†]

* [MS. — “Too hard, but it was not my purpose — why.”]

† [The sacrifices of Abel and Cain follow: the first is accepted, the second rejected by Jehovah. Cain, in wrath, attempts to throw down the altars, is opposed by Abel, and strikes him with a half-burnt brand. As a whole, this scene is heavy and clumsily managed. It can hardly fail to strike the reader as a defect in poetry, no less than a departure from history, that the event which is the catastrophe of the drama, is no otherwise than incidentally, we may say accidentally, produced by those which precede it. Cain, whose whole character is represented in Scripture as envious and malicious, rather than impious;—this Cain, as painted by Lord Byron, has no quarrel with his brother whatever, nor, except in a single word, does he intimate any jealousy of him. Two acts, and half the third, are passed without our advancing a single step towards the conclusion; and Abel at length falls by a random blow given in a struggle of which the object is not his destruction, but the overthrow of Jehovah's altar. If we could suppose a reader to sit down to a perusal of the drama in ignorance of its catastrophe, he could scarcely be less surprised by its termination in such a stroke of chance-medley, than if Abel had been made to drop down in an apoplexy, or Cain to die of grief over his body. — BISHOP HEBER.]

Cain. And I none! — Who makes me brotherless?
His eyes are open! then he is not dead!
Death is like sleep; and sleep shuts down our lids.
His lips, too, are apart; why then he breathes;
And yet I feel it not. — His heart! — his heart! —
Let me see, doth it beat? methinks — No! — no!
This is a vision, else I am become
The native of another and worse world. [wet;
The earth swims round me: — what is this? — 'tis
[*Puts his hand to his brow, and then looks at it.*
And yet there are no dews! 'Tis blood — my blood —
My brother's and my own; and shed by me!
Then what have I further to do with life,
Since I have taken life from my own flesh?
But he can not be dead! — Is silence death?
No; he will wake; then let me watch by him.
Life cannot be so slight, as to be quenched
Thus quickly! — he hath spoken to me since —
What shall I say to him? — My brother! — No:
He will not answer to that name; for brethren
Smite not each other. Yet — yet — speak to me.
Oh! for a word more of that gentle voice,
That I may bear to hear my own again!

Enter ZILLAH.

Zillah. I heard a heavy sound; what can it be?
'Tis Cain; and watching by my husband. What
Dost thou there, brother? Doth he sleep? Oh,
heaven! [no!
What means this paleness, and yon stream? — No,

It is not blood ; for who would shed his blood ?
Abel ! what's this ? — who hath done this ? He
moves not ;

He breathes not : and his hands drop down from mine
With stony lifelessness ! Ah ! cruel Cain !
Why cam'st thou not in time to save him from
This violence ? Whatever hath assailed him,
Thou wert the stronger, and should'st have stepped in
Between him and aggression ! Father ! — Eve ! —
Adah ! — come hither ! Death is in the world !

[*Exit ZILLAH, calling on her Parents, etc.*

Cain (solus). And who hath brought him there ?
— I — who abhor

The name of Death so deeply, that the thought
Empoisoned all my life, before I knew
His aspect — I have led him here, and giv'n
My brother to his cold and still embrace,
As if he would not have asserted his
Inexorable claim without my aid.
I am awake at last — a dreary dream
Had maddened me ; — but *he* shall ne'er awake !

Enter ADAM, EVE, ADAH, and ZILLAH.

Adam. A voice of woe from Zillah brings me
here. —

What do I see ? — 'Tis true ! — My son ! — my son !
Woman, behold the serpent's work, and thine !

[*To EVE.*

Eve. Oh ! speak not of it now : the serpent's fangs
Are in my heart. My best beloved, Abel !

Jehovah ! this is punishment beyond
A mother's sin, to take *him* from me !

Adam. Who,
Or what hath done this deed ? — speak, Cain, since
thou

Wert present ; was it some more hostile angel,
Who walks not with Jehovah ? or some wild
Brute of the forest ?

Eve. Ah ! a livid light
Breaks through, as from a thunder-cloud ! you
brand,

Massy and bloody ! snatched from off the altar,
And black with smoke, and red with ——

Adam. Speak, my son !
Speak, and assure us, wretched as we are,
That we are not more miserable still.

Adah. Speak, Cain ! and say it was not *thou* !

Eve. It was.
I see it now — he hangs his guilty head,
And covers his ferocious eye with hands
Incarnadine.

Adah. Mother, thou dost him wrong—
Cain ! clear thee from this horrible accusal,
Which grief wrings from our parent.

Eve. Hear, Jehovah
May the eternal serpent's curse be on him !
For he was fitter for his seed than ours.
May all his days be desolate ! May ——

Adah. Hold !
Curse him not, mother, for he is thy son —

Curse him not, mother, for he is my brother,
And my betrothed.

Eve. He hath left thee no brother —
Zillah no husband — me *no son!* — for thus
I curse him from my sight for evermore!
All bonds I break between us, as he broke
That of his nature, in yon — Oh death! death!
Why didst thou not take *me*, who first incurred
thee?

Why dost thou not so now?

Adam. Eve! let not this,
Thy natural grief, lead to impiety!
A heavy doom was long forespoken to us;
And now that it begins, let it be borne
In such sort as may show our God, that we
Are faithful servants to his holy will.

Eve (pointing to Cain). *His will!!* the will of
yon incarnate spirit
Of death, whom I have brought upon the earth
To strew it with the dead. May all the curses
Of life be on him! and his agonies
Drive him forth o'er the wilderness, like us*
From Eden, till his children do by him
As he did by his brother! May the swords
And wings of fiery cherubim pursue him
By day and night — snakes spring up in his path —
Earth's fruits be ashes in his mouth — the leaves
On which he lays his head to sleep be strewed

*[MS. — "Drive him forth o'er the world, as we were driven."]]

With scorpions! May his dreams be of his victim!
His waking a continual dread of death!
May the clear rivers turn to blood as he
Stoops down to stain them with his raging lip!
May every element shun or change to him!
May he live in the pangs which others die with!
And death itself wax something worse than death
To him who first acquainted him with man!
Hence, fratricide! henceforth that word is *Cain*,
Through all the coming myriads of mankind,
Who shall abhor thee, though thou wert their sire!
May the grass wither from thy feet! the woods
Deny thee shelter! earth a home! the dust
A grave! the sun his light! and heaven her
God! * [Exit EVE.

Adam. Cain! get thee forth: we dwell no more
together.

Depart! and leave the dead to me — I am
Henceforth alone — we never must meet more.

Adah. Oh, part not with him thus, my father: do
not

Add thy deep curse to Eve's upon his head!

* [The three last lines were not in the original MS. In forwarding them to Mr. Murray, to be added to Eve's speech, Byron says — "There's as pretty a piece of imprecation for you, when joined to the lines already sent, as you may wish to meet with in the course of your business. But don't forget the addition of these three lines, which are clinchers to Eve's speech. Let me know what Gifford thinks, for I have a good opinion of the piece, as poetry; it is in my gay metaphysical style, and in the Manfred line."]

Adam. I curse him not: his spirit be his curse.
Come, Zillah!

Zillah. I must watch my husband's corse.

Adam. We will return again, when he is gone
Who hath provided for us this dread office.
Come, Zillah!

Zillah. Yet one kiss on yon pale clay,
And those lips once so warm — my heart! my heart!

[*Exeunt ADAM and ZILLAH, weeping.*]

Adah. Cain! thou hast heard, we must go forth.

I am ready,
So shall our children be. I will bear Enoch,
And you his sister. Ere the sun declines
Let us depart, nor walk the wilderness
Under the cloud of night. — Nay, speak to me.
To me — *thine own.*

Cain: Leave me!

Adah. Why, all have left thee.

Cain. And wherefore lingerest thou? Dost thou
not fear

To dwell with one who hath done this?

Adah. I fear

Nothing except to leave thee, much as I
Shrink from the deed which leaves thee brotherless.
I must not speak of this — it is between thee
And the great God.

A Voice from within exclaims, Cain! Cain!

Adah. Hear'st thou that voice?

The voice within. Cain! Cain!

Adah. It soundeth like an angel's tone.

Enter the ANGEL of the Lord.

Angel. Where is thy brother Abel?

Cain. Am I then
My brother's keeper?

Angel. Cain! what hast thou done?
The voice of thy slain brother's blood cries out,
Even from the ground, unto the Lord! — Now art
thou

Cursed from the earth, which opened late her mouth
To drink thy brother's blood from thy rash hand.
Henceforth, when thou shalt till the ground, it shall
not

Yield thee her strength; a fugitive shalt thou
Be from this day, and vagabond on earth!

Adah. This punishment is more than he can bear.
Behold, thou drivest him from the face of earth,
And from the face of God shall he be hid.
A fugitive and vagabond on earth,
'T will come to pass, that whoso findeth him
Shall slay him.

Cain. Would they could! but who are they
Shall slay me? Where are these on the lone earth
As yet unpeopled?

Angel. Thou hast slain thy brother,
And who shall warrant thee against thy son?

Adah. Angel of Light! be merciful, nor say
That this poor aching breast now nourishes
A murderer in my boy, and of his father.

Angel. Then he would but be what his father is.
Did not the milk of Eve give nutriment

To him thou now see'st so besmeared with blood?
The fratricide might well engender parricides. —
But it shall not be so — the Lord thy God
And mine commandeth me to set his seal
On Cain, so that he may go forth in safety.
Who slayeth Cain, a sevenfold vengeance shall
Be taken on his head. Come hither!

Cain.

What

Wouldst thou with me?

Angel.

To mark upon thy brow

Exemption from such deeds as thou hast done.

Cain. No, let me die!

Angel.

It must not be.

[*The ANGEL sets the mark on CAIN'S brow.*]

Cain.

It burns

My brow, but nought to that which is within it.

Is there more? let me meet it as I may. [the womb,

Angel. Stern hast thou been and stubborn from

As the ground thou must henceforth till; but he

Thou slew'st was gentle as the flocks he tended.

Cain. After the fall too soon was I begotten;

Ere yet my mother's mind subsided from

The serpent, and my sire still mourned for Eden.

That which I am, I am; I did not seek

For life, nor did I make myself; but could I

With my own death redeem him from the dust —

And why not so? let him return to day,

And I lie ghastly! so shall be restored

By God the life to him he loved; and taken

From me a being I ne'er loved to bear.

Angel. Who shall heal murder? what is done is done ;

Go forth ! fulfil thy days ! and be thy deeds

Unlike the last !

[*The ANGEL disappears.*]

Adah. He's gone, let us go forth ;

I hear our little Enoch cry within

Our bower.

Cain. Ah ! little knows he what he weeps for !

And I who have shed blood cannot shed tears !

But the four rivers * would not cleanse my soul.

Think'st thou my boy will bear to look on me ?

Adah. If I thought that he would not, I would —

Cain (interrupting her).

No,

No more of threats : we have had too many of them :

Go to our children ; I will follow thee.

Adah. I will not leave thee lonely with the dead ;

Let us depart together.†

Cain.

Oh ! thou dead

And everlasting witness ! whose unsinking

Blood darkens earth and heaven ! what thou *now* art

I know not ! but if *thou* see'st what *I* am,

I think thou wilt forgive him, whom his God

Can ne'er forgive, nor his own soul. — Farewell !

* The "four rivers" which flowed round Eden, and consequently the only waters with which Cain was acquainted upon earth.

† [The catastrophe is brought about with great dramatic skill and effect. The murderer is sorrowful and confounded, — his parents reprobate and renounce him, — his wife clings to him with eager and unhesitating affection; and they wander forth together into the vast solitude of the universe. — JEFFREY.]

I must not, dare not touch what I have made thee.
I, who sprung from the same womb with thee, drained
The same breast, clasped thee often to my own,
In fondness brotherly and boyish, I
Can never meet thee more, nor even dare
To do that for thee, which thou shouldst have done
For me — compose thy limbs into their grave —
The first grave yet dug for mortality.
But who hath dug that grave? Oh, earth! Oh, earth!
For all the fruits thou hast rendered to me, I
Give thee back this. — Now for the wilderness.

[*ADAH stoops down and kisses the body of ABEL.*

Adah. A dreary, and an early doom, my brother,
Has been thy lot! Of all who mourn for thee,
I alone must not weep. My office is
Henceforth to dry up tears, and not to shed them;
But yet of all who mourn, none mourn like me,
Not only for thyself, but him who slew thee.
Now, Cain! I will divide thy burden with thee.

Cain. Eastward from Eden will we take our way;
'Tis the most desolate, and suits my steps.

Adah. Lead! thou shalt be my guide, and may
our God

Be thine! Now let us carry forth our children.

Cain. And *he* who lieth there was childless. I
Have dried the fountain of a gentle race,
Which might have graced his recent marriage couch,
And might have tempered this stern blood of mine,
Uniting with our children Abel's offspring!
O Abel!

Adah. Peace be with him !

Cain.

But with *me* ! —

[*Exeunt.* *]

* [The reader has seen what Sir Walter Scott's general opinion of "Cain" was, in the letter appended to the dedication, *ante*, p. 9. Moore's was conveyed to Byron in these words:—

"I have read Foscari and Cain. The former does not please me so highly as Sardanapalus. It has the fault of all those violent Venetian stories; being unnatural and improbable, and therefore, in spite of all your fine management of them, appealing but remotely to one's sympathies. But Cain is wonderful—terrible—never to be forgotten. If I am not mistaken, it will sink deep into the world's heart; and while many will shudder at its blasphemy, all must fall prostrate before its grandeur. Talk of Æschylus and his Prometheus!—here is the true spirit both of the Poet—and the Devil."

Byron's answer to Moore on this occasion contains the substance of all that he ever thought fit to advance in defence of the assaulted points in his "Mystery:"—

"With respect to religion," he says, "can I never convince you that *I* hold no such opinions as the characters in that drama, which seems to have frightened everybody? My ideas of a character may run away with me: like all imaginative men, I, of course, embody myself with the character *while I draw* it, but not a moment after the pen is from off the paper."

He thus alludes to the effects of the critical tempest excited by "Cain," in the eleventh canto of "Don Juan."

"In twice five years the 'greatest living poet,'
Like to the champion in the fisty ring,
Is called on to support his claim, or show it,
Although 'tis an imaginary thing.
Even I—albeit I'm sure I did not know it,
Nor sought of foolscap subjects to be king—
Was reckoned, a considerable time,
The Grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme.

"But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero
My Leipsic, and my Mont Saint Jean seems *Cain*."

We shall now present the reader with a few of the most elaborate summaries of the contemporary critics, — favorable and unfavorable, — beginning with the Edinburgh Review.

Mr. Jeffrey says, — “ Though ‘ Cain ’ abounds in beautiful passages, and shows more *power*, perhaps, than any of the author’s dramatical compositions, we regret very much that it should ever have been published. It will give very great scandal and offence to pious persons in general, and may be the means of suggesting the most painful doubts and distressing perplexities to hundreds of minds that might never otherwise have been exposed to such dangerous disturbance. Lord Byron has no priestlike cant or priestlike reviling to apprehend from us. We do not charge him with being either a disciple or an apostle of Lucifer; nor do we describe his poetry as a mere compound of blasphemy and obscenity. On the contrary, we are inclined to believe that he wishes well to the happiness of mankind, and are glad to testify that his poems abound with sentiments of great dignity and tenderness, as well as passages of infinite sublimity and beauty.”

The Reviewer in the Quarterly was Bishop Heber. His article ends as follows:—

“ We do not think, that there is much vigor or poetical propriety in any of the characters of Lord Byron’s *Mystery*. Eve, on one occasion, and one only, expresses herself with energy, and not even then with any great depth of that maternal feeling which the death of her favorite son was likely to excite in her. Adam moralizes without dignity. Abel is as dull as he is pious. Lucifer, though his first appearance is well conceived, is as sententious and sarcastic as a Scotch metaphysician; and the gravamina which drive Cain into impiety are circumstances which could only produce a similar effect on a weak and sluggish mind, — the necessity of exertion and the fear of death! Yet, in the happiest climate of earth, and amid the early vigor of nature, it would be absurd to describe (nor has Lord Byron so described it) the toil to which Cain can have been subject as excessive or burdensome. And he is made too happy in his love, too extravagantly fond of his wife and his child, to have much leisure for those gloomy thoughts which belong to disappointed ambition and jaded licentiousness. Nor, though there are some

passages in this drama of no common power, is the general tone of its poetry so excellent as to atone for these imperfections of design. The dialogue is cold and constrained. The descriptions are like the shadows of a phantasmagoria, at once indistinct and artificial. Except Adah, there is no person in whose fortunes we are interested; and we close the book with no distinct or clinging recollection of any single passage in it, and with the general impression only that Lucifer has said much and done little, and that Cain has been unhappy without grounds and wicked without an object. But if, as a poem, Cain is little qualified to add to Lord Byron's reputation, we are unfortunately constrained to observe that its poetical defects are the very smallest of its demerits. It is not, indeed, as some both of its admirers and its enemies appear to have supposed, a direct attack on Scripture and on the authority of Moses. The expressions of Cain and Lucifer are not more offensive to the ears of piety than such discourses must necessarily be, or than Milton, without offence, has put into the mouths of beings similarly situated."

The following extract is from Mr. Campbell's Magazine:—

"'Cain,' is altogether of a higher order than 'Sardanapalus' and the 'Two Foscari.' Lord Byron has not, indeed, fulfilled our expectations of a gigantic picture of the first murderer; for there is scarcely any passion, except the immediate agony of rage, which brings on the catastrophe; and Cain himself is little more than the subject of supernatural agency. This piece is essentially nothing but a vehicle for striking allusions to the mighty abstractions of Death and Life, Eternity and Time; for vast but dim descriptions of the regions of space, and for daring disputations on that great problem, the origin of evil. The groundwork of the arguments on the awful subjects handled is very common-place; but they are arrayed in great majesty of language, and conducted with a frightful audacity. The direct attacks on the goodness of God are not, perhaps, taken apart, bolder than some passages of Milton; but they inspire quite a different sensation; because, in thinking of *Paradise Lost*, we never regard the Deity, or Satan, as other than great adverse powers, created by the imagination of the poet. The personal identity which Milton has given to his spiritual intelligences,—

the local habitations which he has assigned them, — the material beauty with which he has invested their forms, — all these remove the idea of impurity from their discourses. But we know nothing of Lord Byron's Lucifer, except his speeches: he is invented only that he may utter them; and the whole appears an abstract discussion, held for its own sake, not maintained in order to serve the dramatic consistency of the persons. He has made no attempt to imitate Milton's plastic power; — that power by which our great poet has made his Heaven and Hell, and the very regions of space, sublime realities, palpable to the imagination, and has traced the lineaments of his angelic messengers with the precision of a sculptor. The Lucifer of 'Cain' is a mere bodiless abstraction, — the shadow of a dogma; and all the scenery over which he presides is dim, vague, and seen only in faint outline. There is, no doubt, a very uncommon power displayed, even in this shadowing out of the ethereal journey of the spirit and his victim, and in the vast sketch of the world of phantasms at which they arrive: but they are utterly unlike the massive grandeurs of Milton's creation. We are far from imputing intentional impiety to Lord Byron for this Mystery; nor, though its language occasionally shocks, do we apprehend any danger will arise from its perusal."

So much for the professed Reviewers. We shall conclude with a passage from Sir Egerton Brydges's "Letters on the Character and Genius of Lord Byron:" —

"I remember, when I first read 'Cain,' I thought it, as a composition, the most enchanting and irresistible of all Lord Byron's works; and I think so still. Some of the sentiments, taken detachedly, and left unanswered, are no doubt dangerous, and therefore ought not to have been so left; but the class of readers whom this poem is likely to interest are of so very elevated a cast, and the effect of the poetry is to refine, spiritualize, and illumine the imagination with such a sort of unearthly sublimity, that the mind of these, I am persuaded, will become too strong to incur any taint thus predicted, from the defect which has been so much insisted on."

HEAVEN AND EARTH ;

A MYSTERY,

FOUNDED ON THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE IN GENESIS, CHAP. VI.

“And it came to pass . . . that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair ; and they took them wives of all which they chose.”

“And woman wailing for her demon lover.” — COLERIDGE.

VOL. VIII.

1

(1)

INTRODUCTION

TO HEAVEN AND EARTH.

“HEAVEN and Earth” was written at Ravenna, in October, 1821. In forwarding it to Mr. Murray, in the following month, Lord Byron says:—“Enclosed is a lyrical drama, entitled ‘A Mystery.’ You will find it pious enough, I trust—at least some of the chorus might have been written by Sternhold and Hopkins themselves for that, and perhaps for melody. As it is longer, and more lyrical and Greek, than I intended at first, I have not divided it into acts, but called what I have sent *Part First*; as there is a suspension of the action which may either close there without impropriety, or be continued in a way that I have in view. I wish the first part to be published before the second; because, if it don’t succeed, it is better to stop there, than to go on in a fruitless experiment.”

Though without delay revised by Mr. Gifford, and printed, this “First Part” was not published till 1822, when it appeared in the second number of the “Liberal.” The “Mystery” was never completed.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Angels. — SAMIASA.

AZAZIEL.

RAPHAEL the Archangel.

Men. — NOAH and his Sons.

IRAD.

JAPHET.

Women. — ANAH.

AHOLIBAMAH.

Chorus of Spirits of the Earth. — Chorus of Mortals.

HEAVEN AND EARTH.

PART I.

SCENE I.*

A woody and mountainous district near Mount Ararat. — Time, midnight.

Enter ANAH and AHOLIBAMAH.

Anah. OUR father sleeps: it is the hour when they
Who love us are accustomed to descend
Through the deep clouds o'er rocky Ararat: —
How my heart beats!

* [The great power of this "Mystery" is in its fearless and daring simplicity. Lord Byron faces at once all the grandeur of his sublime subject. He seeks for nothing, but it rises before him in its death-doomed magnificence. Man, or angel, or demon, the being who mourns, or laments, or exults, is driven to speak by his own soul. The angels deign not to use many words, even to their beautiful paramours; and they scorn Noah and his sententious sons. The first scene is a woody and mountainous district, near Mount Ararat; and the time midnight. Mortal creatures, conscious of their own wickedness, have heard awful

Aho. Let us proceed upon
Our invocation.

Anah. But the stars are hidden.
I tremble.

Aho. So do I, but not with fear
Of aught save their delay.

Anah. My sister, though
I love Azaziel more than — oh, too much!
What was I going to say? my heart grows impicus.

Aho. And where is the impiety of loving
Celestial natures?

Anah. But, Aholibamah;
I love our God less since his angel loved me:
This cannot be of good; and though I know not
That I do wrong, I feel a thousand fears
Which are not ominous of right.

Aho. Then wed thee
Unto some son of clay, and toil and spin!
There's Japhet loves thee well, hath loved thee long:
Marry, and bring forth dust!

Anah. I should have loved
Azaziel not less were he mortal; yet

predictions of the threatened flood, and all their lives are darkened with terror. But the sons of God have been dwellers on earth, and women's hearts have been stirred by the beauty of these celestial visitants. Anah and Aholibamah, two of these angel-stricken maidens, come wandering along while others sleep, to pour forth their invocations to their demon lovers. They are of very different characters: Anah, soft, gentle, and submissive; Aholibamah, proud, impetuous, and aspiring — the one loving in fear, and the other in ambition. — WILSON.]

I am glad he is not. I can not outlive him.
And when I think that his immortal wings
Will one day hover o'er the sepulchre
Of the poor child of clay which so adored him,
As he adores the Highest, death becomes
Less terrible ; but yet I pity him :
His grief will be of ages, or at least
Mine would be such for him, were I the seraph,
And he the perishable.

Aho. Rather say,
That he will single forth some other daughter
Of Earth, and love her as he once loved Anah.

Anah. And if it should be so, and she loved him,
Better thus than that he should weep for me.

Aho. If I thought thus of Samiasa's love,
All seraph as he is, I'd spurn him from me.
But to our invocation! — 'Tis the hour.

Anah. Seraph !

From thy sphere!

Whatever star contain thy glory ;
In the eternal depths of heaven
Albeit thou watchest with "the seven," *
Though through space infinite and hoary
Before thy bright wings worlds be driven,
Yet hear !

Oh! think of her who holds thee dear!
And though she nothing is to thee,
Yet think that thou art all to her.

* The archangels, said to be seven in number, and to occupy the eighth rank in the celestial hierarchy.

Thou canst not tell, — and never be
Such pangs decreed to aught save me, —
The bitterness of tears.

Eternity is in thine years,
Unborn, undying beauty in thine eyes ;
With me thou canst not sympathize,
Except in love, and there thou must
Acknowledge that more loving dust
Ne'er wept beneath the skies.
Thou walk'st thy many worlds, thou see'st
The face of him who made thee great,
As he hath made me of the least
Of those cast out from Eden's gate:
Yet, Seraph dear !

Oh hear !

For thou hast loved me, and I would not die
Until I know what I must die in knowing,
That thou forget'st in thine eternity
Her whose heart death could not keep from
o'erflowing

For thee, immortal essence as thou art !
Great is their love who love in sin and fear ;
And such, I feel, are waging in my heart
A war unworthy : to an Adamite
Forgive, my Seraph ! that such thoughts
appear,

For sorrow is our element ;

Delight

An Eden kept afar from sight,
Though sometimes with our visions blent.

The hour is near
Which tells me we are not abandoned quite.—

Appear! Appear!

Seraph!

My own Azazel! be but here,
And leave the stars to their own light.

Aho. Samiasa!

Wheresoe'er

Thou rulest in the upper air —

Or warring with the spirits who may dare

Dispute with Him

Who made all empires, empire; or recalling
Some wandering star, which shoots through the
abyss, falling,

Whose tenants dying, while their world is

Share the dim destiny of clay in this;

Or joining with the inferior cherubim,

Thou deignest to partake their hymn —

Samiasa!

I call thee, I await thee, and I love thee.

Many may worship thee, that will I not:

If that thy spirit down to mine may move thee,

Descend and share my lot!

Though I be formed of clay,

And thou of beams

More bright than those of day

On Eden's streams,

Thine immortality can not repay

With love more warm than mine

My love. There is a ray

In me, which, though forbidden yet to shine,
I feel was lighted at thy God's and thine.

It may be hidden long: death and decay

Our mother Eve bequeathed us — but my heart
Defies it: though this life must pass away

Is *that* a cause for thee and me to part?

Thou art immortal — so am I: I feel —

I feel my immortality o'ersweep

All pains, all tears, all time, all fears, and peal,

Like the eternal thunders of the deep,

Into my ears this truth — “Thou liv'st for ever!”

But if it be in joy

I know not, nor would know;

That secret rests with the Almighty giver

Who folds in clouds the founts of bliss and woe.

But thee and me he never can destroy;

Change us he may, but not o'erwhelm; we are

Of as eternal essence, and must war

With him if he will war with us: with *thee*

I can share all things, even immortal sorrow;

For thou hast ventured to share life with *me*,

And shall *I* shrink from thine eternity?

No! though the serpent's sting should pierce
me through,

And thou thyself wert like the serpent, coil

Around me still! and I will smile,

And curse thee not; but hold

Thee in as warm a fold

As — but descend; and prove

A mortal's love

For an immortal. If the skies contain
More joy than thou canst give and take, remain! *

Anah. Sister! sister! I view them winging
Their bright way through the parted night.

Aho. The clouds from off their pinions flinging,
As though they bore to-morrow's light.

Anah. But if our father see the sight!

Aho. He would but deem it was the moon
Rising unto some sorcerer's tune
An hour too soon.

Anah. They come! *he* comes! — Azaziel!

Aho. Haste

To meet them! Oh! for wings to bear
My spirit, while they hover there,
To Samiasa's breast!

Anah. Lo! they have kindled all the west,
Like a returning sunset; — lo!

On Ararat's late secret crest
A mild and many-colored bow,
The remnant of their flashing path,
Now shines! and now, behold! it hath
Returned to night, as rippling foam,
Which the leviathan hath lashed
From his unfathomable home,
When sporting on the face of the calm deep,

* [This invocation is extremely beautiful: its chief beauty lies in the continuous and meandering flow of its impassioned versification. At its close, — and it might well win down to earth erring angels from heaven, — the maidens disappear in the midnight darkness, hoping the presence of their celestial lovers. — WILSON.]

Subsides soon after he again hath dashed
Down, down, to where the ocean's fountains sleep.*

Aho. They have touched earth! Samiasa!

Anah.

My Azaziel!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.†

Enter IRAD and JAPHET.

Irada. Despond not: wherefore wilt thou wander
thus

To add thy silence to the silent night,
And lift thy tearful eye unto the stars?
They cannot aid thee.

Japh. But they soothe me — now
Perhaps she looks upon them as I look.
Methinks a being that is beautiful
Becometh more so as it looks on beauty,
The eternal beauty of undying things.
Oh, Anah!

Irada. But she loves thee not.

Japh.

Alas!

Irada. And proud Aholibamah spurns me also.

* [Lord Byron here takes a wide career, and is sometimes obscure and confused; but the flashes of fire continually break through, and illumine the clouds of smoke and vapor. The extravagance is dictated by passion. His muse, even in her riddles and digressions, has a sybil-like, prophetic fury. — JEFFREY.]

† [In the second scene, Japhet, Noah's son, and Irad — the earthly and despised lovers of the two maidens — appear. Their talk is somewhat dull; which, we presume, is natural in such circumstances. — WILSON.]

Japh. I feel for thee too.

Irad. Let her keep her pride,
Mine hath enabled me to bear her scorn :
It may be, time too will avenge it.

Japh. Canst thou
Find joy in such a thought?

Irad. Nor joy nor sorrow.
I loved her well ; I would have loved her better,
Had love been met with love : as 't is, I leave her
To brighter destinies, if so she deems them.

Japh. What destinies?

Irad. I have some cause to think
She loves another.

Japh. Anah !

Irad. No ; her sister.

Japh. What other?

Irad. That I know not ; but her air,
If not her words, tells me she loves another.

Japh. Ay, but not Anah : she but loves her God.

Irad. Whate'er she loveth, so she loves thee not,
What can it profit thee ? *

Japh. True, nothing ; but
I love.

Irad. And so did I.

* [This is one of those bitter, taunting sarcasms that escape from Lord Byron's pen, in spite of himself. Japhet is afterwards introduced alone in a mountainous cave ; and his soliloquy, bemoaning his own fate, and the approaching destruction of mankind, is interrupted by a laugh of demons, rejoicing over the event. This scene is terrific. — JEFFREY.]

Japh. And now thou lov'st not,
Or think'st thou lov'st not, art thou happier?

Irada. Yes.

Japh. I pity thee.

Irada. Me! why?

Japh. For being happy
Deprived of that which makes my misery.

Irada. I take thy taunt as part of thy distemper,
And would not feel as thou dost for more shekels
Than all our father's herds would bring if weighed
Against the metal of the sons of Cain —
The yellow dust they try to barter with us,
As if such useless and discolored trash,
The refuse of the earth, could be received
For milk, and wool, and flesh, and fruits, and all
Our flocks and wilderness afford. — Go, Japhet,
Sigh to the stars, as wolves howl to the moon —
I must back to my rest.

Japh. And so would I
If I could rest.

Irada. Thou wilt not to our tents then?

Japh. No, Irada; I will to the cavern, whose
Mouth they say opens from the internal world
To let the inner spirits of the earth
Forth when they walk its surface.

Irada. Wherefore so?
What wouldst thou there?

Japh. Soothe further my sad spirit
With gloom as sad: it is a hopeless spot,
And I am hopeless.

Irad. But 't is dangerous ;
Strange sounds and sights have peopled it with
terrors.

I must go with thee.

Japh. Irad, no ; believe me
I feel no evil thought, and fear no evil.

Irak. But evil things will be thy foe the more
As not being of them: turn thy steps aside,
Or let mine be with thine.

Japh. No, neither, Irad ;
I must proceed alone.

Trad. Then peace be with thee!

[*Exit IRAD*

Japh. (solus). Peace! I have sought it where it
should be found,
In love — with love, too, which perhaps deserved it:
And, in its stead, a heaviness of heart —
A weakness of the spirit — listless days,
And nights inexorable to sweet sleep —
Have come upon me. Peace! what peace? the calm
Of desolation, and the stillness of
The untrodden forest, only broken by
The sweeping tempest through its groaning boughs;
Such is the sullen or the fitful state
Of my mind overworn. The earth's grown wicked,
And many signs and portents have proclaimed
A change at hand, and an o'erwhelming doom,
To perishable beings. Oh, my Anah!
When the dread hour denounced shall open wide
The fountains of the deep, how mightest thou

Have lain within this bosom, folded from
The elements; this bosom, which in vain
Hath beat for thee, and then will beat more vainly,
While thine —— Oh, God! at least remit to her
Thy wrath! for she is pure amidst the failing
As a star in the clouds, which cannot quench,
Although they obscure it for an hour. My Anah!
How would I have adored thee, but thou wouldst not;
And still would I redeem thee — see thee live
When ocean is earth's grave, and, unopposed
By rock or shallow, the leviathan,
Lord of the shoreless sea and watery world,
Shall wonder at his boundlessness of realm.

[*Exit* JAPHET.

Enter NOAH and SHEM.

Noah. Where is thy brother Japhet?

Shem. He went forth.

According to his wont, to meet with Irad,
He said; but, as I fear, to bend his steps
Towards Anah's tents, round which he hovers nightly,
Like a dove round and round its pillaged nest;
Or else he walks the wild up to the cavern
Which opens to the heart of Ararat.

Noah. What doth he there? It is an evil spot
Upon an earth all evil; for things worse
Than even wicked men resort there: he
Still loves this daughter of a fated race,
Although he could not wed her if she loved him,
And that she doth not. Oh, the unhappy hearts

Of men! that one of my blood, knowing well
The destiny and evil of these days,
And that the hour approacheth, should indulge
In such forbidden yearnings! Lead the way —
He must be sought for!

Shem. Go not forward, father:
I will seek Japhet.

Noah. Do not fear for me:
All evil things are powerless on the man
Selected by Jehovah. — Let us on.

Shem. To the tents of the father of the sisters?

Noah. No; to the cavern of the Caucasus.

[*Exeunt* NOAH and SHEM.]

SCENE III.

The mountains.—A cavern, and the rocks of Caucasus.

Japh. (solus). Ye wilds, that look eternal; and
thou cave,
Which seem'st unfathomable; and ye mountains,
So varied and so terrible in beauty;
Here, in your rugged majesty of rocks
And toppling trees that twine their roots with stone
In perpendicular places, where the foot
Of man would tremble, could he reach them — yes,
Ye look eternal! Yet, in a few days,
Perhaps even hours, ye will be changed, rent, hurled
Before the mass of waters; and yon cave,
Which seems to lead into a lower world,
Shall have its depths searched by the sweeping wave,

And dolphins gambol in the lion's den!
And man —— Oh, men! my fellow-beings! Who
Shall weep above your universal grave,
Save I? Who shall be left to weep? My kinsmen,
Alas! what am I better than ye are,
That I must live beyond ye? Where shall be
The pleasant places where I thought of Anah
While I had hope? or the more savage haunts,
Scarce less beloved, where I despaired for her?
And can it be! — Shall yon exulting peak,
Whose glittering top is like a distant star,
Lie low beneath the boiling of the deep?
No more to have the morning sun break forth,
And scatter back the mists in floating folds
From its tremendous brow? no more to have
Day's broad orb drop behind its head at even,
Leaving it with a crown of many hues?
No more to be the beacon of the world,
For angels to alight on, as the spot
Nearest the stars? And can those words "*no more*"
Be meant for thee, for all things, save for us,
And the predestined creeping things reserved
By my sire to Jehovah's bidding? May
He preserve *them*, and *I not* have the power
To snatch the loveliest of earth's daughters from
A doom which even some serpent, with his mate,
Shall 'scape to save his kind to be prolonged,
To hiss and sting through some emerging world,
Reeking and dank from out the slime, whose ooze
Shall slumber o'er the wreck of this until

The salt morass subside into a sphere
Beneath the sun, and be the monument,
The sole and undistinguished sepulchre,
Of yet quick myriads of all life? How much
Breath will be stilled at once! All beauteous world
So young, so marked out for destruction, I
With a cleft heart look on thee day by day,
And night by night, thy numbered days and nights:
I cannot save thee, cannot save even her
Whose love had made me love thee more; but as
A portion of thy dust, I cannot think
Upon thy coming doom without a feeling
Such as — Oh God! and canst thou — [*He pauses.**]

A rushing sound from the cavern is heard, and shouts of laughter — afterwards a Spirit passes.

Japh. In the name
Of the Most High, what art thou?

Spirit (laughs). Ha! ha! ha!

Japh. By all that earth holds holiest, speak !

Spirit (laughs). Ha! ha!

Japh. By the approaching deluge! by the earth
Which will be strangled by the ocean! by
The deep which will lay open all her fountains!
The heaven which will convert her clouds to seas,

*[This soliloquy has the fault of being too long and wire-drawn. At its close, spirits rush from the cavern, and exult in the approaching calamity of the world: a dialogue ensues between Japhet and one of them, and a chorus is sung by a body of them, part of which is truly noble. — CAMPBELL.]

And the Omnipotent who makes and crushes !
Thou unknown, terrible, and indistinct,
Yet awful Thing of Shadows, speak to me !
Why dost thou laugh that horrid laugh ?

Spirit. Why weep'st thou ?

Japh. For earth and all her children.

Spirit. Ha ! ha ! ha ! [*Spirit vanishes.*

Japh. How the fiend mocks the tortures of a world,
The coming desolation of an orb,
On which the sun shall rise and warm no life !
How the earth sleeps ! and all that in it is
Sleep too upon the very eve of death !
Why should they wake to meet it ? What is here,
Which look like death in life, and speak like
things

Born ere this dying world ? They come like clouds !
[*Various Spirits pass from the cavern.*

Spirit. Rejoice !

The abhorred race
Which could not keep in Eden their high place,
But listened to the voice
Of knowledge without power,
Are nigh the hour
Of death !
Not slow, not single, not by sword, nor sorrow,
Nor years, nor heart-break, nor time's sapping
motion,
Shall they drop off. Behold their last to-morrow !
Earth shall be ocean !
And no breath,

Save of the winds, be on the unbounded wave!
Angels shall tire their wings, but find no spot:
Not even a rock from out the liquid grave

 Shall lift its point to save,
Or show the place where strong Despair hath died,
 After long looking o'er the ocean wide
 For the expected ebb which cometh not:
 All shall be void,
 Destroyed!

Another element shall be the lord
 Of life, and the abhorred
Children of dust be quenched; and of each hue
Of earth nought left but the unbroken blue;
 And of the variegated mountain
 Shall nought remain
 Unchanged, or of the level plain;
 Cedar and pine shall lift their tops in vain:
All merged within the universal fountain,
 Man, earth, and fire, shall die,
 And sea and sky

Look vast and lifeless in the eternal eye.
 Upon the foam

 Who shall erect a home?

Japh. (coming forward). My sire!

 Earth's seed shall not expire;

 Only the evil shall be put away
 From day.

 Avaunt! ye exulting demons of the waste!

 Who howl your hideous joy

When God destroys whom you dare not destroy;

 Hence! haste!

Back to your inner caves!
Until the waves
Shall search you in your secret place,
And drive your sullen race
Forth, to be rolled upon the tossing winds
In restless wretchedness along all space!
Spirit. Son of the saved!
When thou and thine have braved
The wide and warring element;
When the great barrier of the deep is rent,
Shall thou and thine be good or happy? — No!
Thy new world and new race shall be of woe —
Less goodly in their aspect, in their years
Less than the glorious giants, who
Yet walk the world in pride,
The Sons of Heaven by many a mortal bride.
Thine shall be nothing of the past, save tears.
And art thou not ashamed
Thus to survive,
And eat, and drink, and wive?
With a base heart so far subdued and tamed,
As even to hear this wide destruction named,
Without such grief and courage, as should rather
Bid thee await the world-dissolving wave,
Than seek a shelter with thy favored father,
And build thy city o'er the drowned earth's grave?
Who would outlive their kind,
Except the base and blind?
Mine
Hateth thine

As of a different order in the sphere,
But not our own.
There is not one who hath not left a throne
Vacant in heaven to dwell in darkness here,
Rather than see his mates endure alone.
Go, wretch ! and give
A life like thine to other wretches — live !
And when the annihilating waters roar
Above what they have done,
Envy the giant patriarchs then no more,
And scorn thy sire as the surviving one !
Thyself for being his son !

Chorus of Spirits issuing from the cavern

Rejoice !
No more the human voice
Shall vex our joys in middle air
With prayer ;
No more
Shall they adore ;
And we, who ne'er for ages have adored
The prayer-exacting Lord,
To whom the omission of a sacrifice
Is vice ;
We, we shall view the deep's salt sources poured
Until one element shall do the work
Of all in chaos ; until they,
The creatures proud of their poor clay,
Shall perish, and their bleached bones shall lurk

In caves, in dens, in clefts of mountains, where
The deep shall follow to their latest lair ;

Where even the brutes, in their despair,
Shall cease to prey on man and on each other,
And the striped tiger shall lie down to die
Beside the lamb, as though he were his brother ;
Till all things shall be as they were,
Silent and uncreated, save the sky :

While a brief truce
Is made with Death, who shall forbear
The little remnant of the past creation,
To generate new nations for his use ;
This remnant, floating o'er the undulation
Of the subsiding deluge, from its slime,
When the hot sun hath baked the reeking soil
Into a world, shall give again to Time
New beings — years — diseases — sorrow — crime —
With all companionship of hate and toil,
Until ——

Japh. (interrupting them). The eternal will
Shall deign to expound this dream
Of good and evil ; and redeem
Unto himself all times, all things ;
And, gathered under his almighty wing.
Abolish hell !

And to the expiated Earth
Restore the beauty of her birth,
Her Eden in an endless paradise,
Where man no more can fall as once he fell,
And even the very demons shall do well !

Spirits. And when shall take effect this wondrous spell?

Japh. When the Redeemer cometh; first in pain,
And then in glory.

Spirit. Meantime still struggle in the mortal chain,
Till earth wax hoary;
War with yourselves, and hell, and heaven, in vain,
Until the clouds look gory
With the blood reeking from each battle plain;
New times, new climes, new arts, new men; but
still,
The same old tears, old crimes, and oldest ill,
Shall be amongst your race in different forms;
But the same moral storms
Shall oversweep the future, as the waves
In a few hours the glorious giants' graves.*

Chorus of Spirits.

Brethren, rejoice!

Mortal, farewell!

Hark! hark! already we can hear the voice
Of growing ocean's gloomy swell;
The winds, too, plume their piercing wings;
The clouds have nearly filled their springs;
The fountains of the great deep shall be broken,
And heaven set wide her windows; † while man-
kind

* "And there were giants in the earth in those days, and after; mighty men, which were of old, men of renown." — *Genesis*.

† "The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." — *Ibid*.

View, unacknowledged, each tremendous token —
Still, as they were from the beginning, blind.
We hear the sound they cannot hear,
The mustering thunders of the threatening
sphere ;
Yet a few hours their coming is delayed —
Their flashing banners, folded still on high,
Yet undisplayed,
Save to the Spirit's all-pervading eye.
Howl ! howl ! oh Earth !
Thy death is nearer than thy recent birth :
Tremble, ye mountains, soon to shrink below
The ocean's overflow !
The wave shall break upon your cliffs ; and shells,
The little shells, of ocean's least things be
Deposed where now the eagle's offspring dwells —
How shall he shriek o'er the remorseless sea !
And call his nestlings up with fruitless yell,
Unanswered, save by the encroaching swell ; —
While man shall long in vain for his broad wings,
The wings which could not save : —
Where could he rest them, while the whole space
brings
Nought to his eye beyond the deep, his grave ?
Brethren, rejoice !
And loudly lift each superhuman voice —
All die,
Save the slight remnant of Seth's seed —
The seed of Seth,
Exempt for future sorrow's sake from death.

But of the sons of Cain
None shall remain ;
And all his goodly daughters
Must lie beneath the desolating waters —
Or, floating upward, with their long hair laid
Along the wave, the cruel heaven upbraid,
Which would not spare
Beings even in death so fair.
It is decreed,
All die !
And to the universal human cry
The universal silence shall succeed !
Fly, brethren, fly !
But still rejoice !
We fell !
They fall !
So perish all
These petty foes of Heaven who shrink from hell !
[*The Spirits disappear, soaring upwards.*
Japh. (solus). God hath proclaimed the destiny of
earth ;
My father's ark of safety hath announced it ;
The very demons shriek it from their caves ;
The scroll * of Enoch prophesied it long
In silent books, which, in their silence, say
More to the mind than thunder to the ear :
And yet men listened not, nor listen ; but
Walk darkling to their doom ; which, though so nigh,

* The book of Enoch, preserved by the Ethiopians, is said by them to be anterior to the flood.

Shakes them no more in their dim disbelief,
Than their last cries shall shake the Almighty
 purpose,
Or deaf obedient ocean, which fulfils it.
No sign yet hangs its banner in the air ;
The clouds are few, and of their wonted texture ;
The sun will rise upon the earth's last day
As on the fourth day of creation, when
God said unto him, " Shine ! " and he broke forth
Into the dawn, which lighted not the yet
Unformed forefather of mankind — but roused
Before the human orison the earlier
Made and far sweeter voices of the birds,
Which in the open firmament of heaven
Have wings like angels, and like them salute
Heaven first each day before the Adamites :
Their matins now draw nigh — the east is kindling —
And they will sing ! and day will break ! Both near,
So near the awful close ! For these must drop
Their outworn pinions on the deep ; and day,
After the bright course of a few brief morrows,—
Ay, day will rise ; but upon what ? — a chaos,
Which was ere day ; and which, renewed, makes
 time
Nothing ! for, without life, what are the hours ?
No more to dust than is eternity
Unto Jehovah, who created both.
Without him, even eternity would be
A void : without man, time, as made for man,
Dies with man, and is swallowed in that deep

Which has no fountain ; as his race will be
Devoured by that which drowns his infant world.—
What have we here? Shapes of both earth and air?
No — *all* of heaven, they are so beautiful.
I cannot trace their features ; but their forms,
How lovelily they move along the side
Of the gray mountain, scattering its mist !
And after the swart savage spirits, whose
Infernal immortality poured forth
Their impious hymn of triumph, they shall be
Welcome as Eden. It may be they come
To tell me the reprieve of our young world,
For which I have so often prayed — They come !
Anah ! oh, God ! and with her * ——

Enter SAMIASA, AZAZIEL, ANAH, and AHOLIBAMAH.

Anah.

Japhet !

Sam.

Lo !

A son of Adam !

Aza.

What doth the earth-born here,
While all his race are slumbering ?

*.[The spirits disappear soaring upwards, and Japhet has again recourse to a very fine soliloquy. He is now joined by Anah and Aholibamah, who are accompanied by the two angels, Samiasa and Azaziel. The angels seem somewhat sulky, and are extremely laconic ; they look like Quakers yet unmoved by the spirit—dull dogs. But Japhet takes them to task very severely. Noah and Shem now join the party, and a conversation ensues between them all, neither very spirited nor very edifying—when enters Raphael the Archangel, who holds a highly poetical dialogue with Samiasa. — WILSON.]

Japh. Angel! what
Dost thou on earth when thou shouldst be on high?

Aza. Know'st thou not, or forget'st thou, that a
part
Of our great function is to guard thine earth?

Japh. But all good angels have forsaken earth,
Which is condemned; nay, even the evil fly
The approaching chaos. Anah! Anah! my
In vain, and long, and still to be beloved!
Why walk'st thou with this spirit, in those hours
When no good spirit longer lights below?

Anah. Japhet, I cannot answer thee; yet, yet
Forgive me ——

Japh. May the Heaven, which soon no more
Will pardon, do so! for thou art greatly tempted.

Aho. Back to thy tents, insulting son of Noah!
We know thee not.

Japh. The hour may come when thou
May'st know me better; and thy sister know
Me still the same which I have ever been.

Sam. Son of the patriarch, who hath ever been
Upright before his God, whate'er thy gifts,
And thy words seem of sorrow, mixed with wrath,
How have Azazel, or myself, brought on thee
Wrong?

Japh. Wrong! the greatest of all wrongs; but thou
Say'st well, though she be dust, I did not, could not,
Deserve her. Farewell, Anah! I have said
That word so often! but now say it, ne'er
To be repeated. Angel! or whate'er

Thou art, or must be soon, hast thou the power
To save this beautiful — *these* beautiful
Children of Cain?

Aza. From what?

Japh. And is it so,
That ye too know not? Angels! angels! ye
Have shared man's sin, and, it may be, now must
Partake his punishment; or, at the least,
My sorrow.

Sam. Sorrow! I ne'er thought till now
To hear an Adamite speak riddles to me.

Japh. And hath not the Most High expounded
them?

Then ye are lost, as they are lost.

Aho. So be it!

If they love as they are loved, they will not shrink
More to be mortal, than I would to dare
An immortality of agonies
With Samiasa!

Anah. Sister! sister! speak not
Thus.

Aza. Fearest thou, my Anah?

Anah. Yes, for thee:

I would resign the greater remnant of
This little life of mine, before one hour
Of thine eternity should know a pang.

Japh. It is for *him*, then! for the seraph thou
Hast left me! That is nothing, if thou hast not
Left thy God too! for unions like to these,
Between a mortal and an immortal, cannot

Be happy or be hallowed. We are sent
Upon the earth to toil and die; and they
Are made to minister on high unto
The Highest: but if he can *save* thee, soon
The hour will come in which celestial aid
Alone can do so.

Anah. Ah! he speaks of death.

Sam. Of death to *us*! and those who are with us!
But that the man seems full of sorrow, I
Could smile.

Japh. I grieve not for myself, nor fear;
I am safe, not for my own deserts, but those
Of a well-doing sire, who hath been found
Righteous enough to save his children. Would
His power was greater of redemption! or
That by exchanging my own life for hers,
Who could alone have made mine happy, she,
The last and loveliest of Cain's race, could share
The ark which shall receive a remnant of
The seed of Seth!

Aho. And dost thou think that we,
With Cain's, the eldest born of Adam's, blood
Warm in our veins, — strong Cain! who was be-
gotten

In Paradise — would mingle with Seth's children?
Seth, the last offspring of old Adam's dotage?
No, not to save all earth, were earth in peril!
Our race hath always dwelt apart from thine
From the beginning, and shall do so ever.

Japh. I did not speak to thee, Aholibamah!

Our race ; behold their stature and their beauty,
Their courage, strength, and length of days ——

Japh. They are numbered.

Aho. Be it so ! but while yet their hours endure,
I glory in my brethren and our fathers.

Japh. My sire and race but glory in their God,
Anah ! and thou ? ——

Anah. Whate'er our God decrees,
The God of Seth as Cain, I must obey,
And will endeavor patiently to obey.
But could I dare to pray in his dread hour
Of universal vengeance (if such should be),
It would not be to live, alone exempt
Of all my house. My sister ! oh, my sister !
What were the world, or other worlds, or all
The brightest future, without the sweet past —
Thy love — my father's — all the life, and all
The things which sprang up with me, like the stars,
Making my dim existence radiant with
Soft lights which were not mine ? Aholibamah !
Oh ! if there should be mercy — seek it, find it :
I abhor death, because that thou must die.

Aho. What, hath this dreamer, with his father's
ark,

The bugbear he hath built to scare the world,
Shaken *my* sister ? Are *we* not the loved
Of seraphs ? and if we were not, must we
Cling to a son of Noah for our lives ?
Rather than thus —— But the enthusiast dreams
The worst of dreams, the fantasies engendered

By hopeless love and heated vigils. Who
Shall shake these solid mountains, this firm earth,
And bid those clouds and waters take a shape
Distinct from that which we and all our sires
Have seen them wear on their eternal way?
Who shall do this?

Japh. He whose one word produced them.

Aho. Who *heard* that word?

Japh. The universe, which leaped
To life before it. Ah! smilest thou still in scorn?
Turn to thy seraphs: if they attest it not,
They are none.

Sam. Aholibamah, own thy God!

Aho. I have ever hailed our Maker, Samiasa,
As thine, and mine: a God of love, not sorrow.

Japh. Alas! what else is love but sorrow? Even
He who made earth in love had soon to grieve
Above its first and best inhabitants.

Aho. 'Tis said so.

Japh. It is even so.

Enter NOAH and SHEM.

Noah. Japhet! What
Dost thou here with these children of the wicked?
Dread'st thou not to partake their coming doom?

Japh. Father, it cannot be a sin to seek
To save an earth-born being; and behold,
These are not of the sinful, since they have
The fellowship of angels.

Noah. These are they, then,
Who leave the throne of God, to take them wives
From out the race of Cain; the sons of heaven,
Who seek earth's daughters for their beauty?

Aza. Patriarch!
Thou hast said it.

Noah. Woe, woe, woe to such communion!
Has not God made a barrier between earth
And heaven, and limited each, kind to kind?

Sam. Was not man made in high Jehovah's image?
Did God not love what he had made? And what
Do we but imitate and emulate
His love unto created love?

Noah. I am
But man, and was not made to judge mankind,
Far less the sons of God; but as our God
Has deigned to commune with me, and reveal
His judgments, I reply, that the descent
Of seraphs from their everlasting seat
Unto a perishable and perishing,
Even on the very *eve* of *perishing*, world,
Cannot be good.

Aza. What! though it were to save?

Noah. Not ye in all your glory can redeem
What he who made you glorious hath condemned.
Were your immortal mission safety, 't would
Be general, not for two, though beautiful;
And beautiful they are, but not the less
Condemned.

Japh. Oh, father! say it not.

Noah. Son! son!
If that thou wouldst avoid their doom, forget
That they exist: they soon shall cease to be;
While thou shalt be the sire of a new world,
And better.

Japh. Let me die with *this*, and *them*!

Noah. Thou *shouldst* for such a thought, but shalt
not; he
Who *can* redeems thee.

Sam. And why him and thee,
More than what he, thy son, prefers to both?

Noah. Ask him who made thee greater than my-
self
And mine, but not less subject to his own
Almightiness. And lo! his mildest and
Least to be tempted messenger appears!

*Enter RAPHAEL * the Archangel.*

Raph. Spirits!
Whose seat is near the throne,
What do ye here?
Is thus a seraph's duty to be shown,
Now that the hour is near
When earth must be alone?
Return!
Adore and burn

[In the original MS. "Michael." "I return you," says Byron to Mr. M., "the revise. I have softened the part to which Gifford objected, and changed the name of Michael to Raphael, who was an angel of gentler sympathies." — *Byron Letters*, July 6, 1822.]

In glorious homage with the elected "seven."

Your place is heaven.

Sam. Raphael!

The first and fairest of the sons of God,

How long hath this been law,

That earth by angels must be left untrod?

Earth! which oft saw

Jehovah's footsteps not disdain her sod!

The world he loved, and made

For love; and oft have we obeyed

His frequent mission with delighted pinions:

Adoring him in his least works displayed;

Watching this youngest star of his dominions;

And, as the latest birth of his great word,

Eager to keep it worthy of our Lord.

Why is thy brow severe?

And wherefore speak'st thou of destruction near?

Raph. Had Samiasa and Azaziel been

In their true place, with the angelic choir,

Written in fire

They would have seen

Jehovah's late decree,

And not inquired their Maker's breath of me:

But ignorance must ever be

A part of sin;

And even the spirits' knowledge shall grow less

As they wax proud within;

For Blindness is the first-born of Excess.

When all good angels left the world, ye stayed

Stung with strange passions, and debased

By mortal feelings for a mortal maid :
But ye are pardoned thus far, and replaced
With your pure equals. Hence ! away ! away !

Or stay,

And lose eternity by that delay

Aza. And thou ! if earth be thus forbidden

In the decree

To us until this moment hidden,

Dost thou not err as we

In being here ?

Raph. I came to call ye back to your fit sphere,

In the great name and at the word of God.

Dear, dearest in themselves, and scarce less
dear

That which I came to do : till now we trod

Together the eternal space ; together

Let us still walk the stars. True, earth must die !

Her race, returned into her womb, must wither,

And much which she inherits : but oh ! why

Cannot this earth be made, or be destroyed,

Without involving ever some vast void

In the immortal ranks ? immortal still

In their immeasurable forfeiture.

Our brother Satan fell ; his burning will

Rather than longer worship dared endure !

But ye who still are pure !

Seraphs ! less mighty than that mightiest one,

Think how he was undone !

And think if tempting man can compensate

For heaven desired too late ?

Long have I warred,
Long must I war
With him who deemed it hard
To be created, and to acknowledge him
Who midst the cherubim
Made him as suns to a dependent star,
Leaving the archangels at his right hand dim.
I loved him — beautiful he was: oh heaven!
Save *his* who made, what beauty and what power
Was ever like to Satan's! Would the hour
In which he fell could ever be forgiven!
The wish is impious: but, oh ye!
Yet undestroyed, be warned! Eternity
With him, or with his God, is in your choice:
He hath not tempted you; he cannot tempt
The angels, from his further snares exempt:
But man hath listened to his voice,
And ye to woman's — beautiful she is,
The serpent's voice less subtle than her kiss.
The snake but vanquished dust; but she will draw
A second host from heaven, to break heaven's law.
Yet, yet, oh fly!
Ye cannot die;
But they
Shall pass away,
While ye shall fill with shrieks the upper sky
For perishable clay,
Whose memory in your immortality
Shall long outlast the sun which gave them day.
Think how your essence differeth from theirs

In all but suffering! why partake
The agony to which they must be heirs —
Born to be ploughed with years, and sown with cares,
And reaped by Death, lord of the human soil?
Even had their days been left to toil their path
Through time to dust, unshortened by God's wrath,
Still they are Evil's prey and Sorrow's spoil.

Aho. Let them fly!

I hear the voice which says that all must die
Sooner than our white-bearded patriarchs died;

 And that on high
 An ocean is prepared,
 While from below

The deep shall rise to meet heaven's overflow.

 Few shall be spared,
It seems; and, of that few, the race of Cain
Must lift their eyes to Adam's God in vain.

 Sister! since it is so,

 And the eternal Lord

 In vain would be implored

 For the remission of one hour of woe,

 Let us resign even what we have adored,
And meet the wave, as we would meet the sword,

 If not unmoved, yet undismayed,
And wailing less for us than those who shall
Survive in mortal or immortal thrall,

 And, when the fatal waters are allayed,
Weep for the myriads who can weep no more.

Fly, seraphs! to your own eternal shore,
Where winds nor howl nor waters roar.

Our portion is to die,
And yours to live for ever:
But which is best, a dead eternity,
Or living, is but known to the great Giver.
Obey him, as we shall obey;
I would not keep this life of mine in clay
An hour beyond his will;
Nor see ye lose a portion of his grace,
For all the mercy which Seth's race
Find still.

Fly!

And as your pinions bear ye back to heaven,
Think that my love still mounts with thee on high,
Samiasa!

And if I look up with a tearless eye,
'Tis that an angel's bride disdains to weep, —
Farewell! Now rise, inexorable deep!

Anah. And must we die?

And must I lose thee too,
Azaziel?

Oh, my heart! my heart!

Thy prophecies were true!

And yet thou wert so happy too!

The blow, though not unlooked for, falls as new:

But yet depart!

Ah! why?

Yet let me not retain thee — fly!

My pangs can be but brief; but thine would be
Eternal, if repulsed from heaven for me.

Too much already hast thou deigned

To one of Adam's race!
Our doom is sorrow: not to us alone,
But to the spirits who have not disdained
To love us, cometh anguish with disgrace.
The first who taught us knowledge hath been hurled
From his once archangelic throne
Into some unknown world:

And thou, Azazel! No —
Thou shalt not suffer woe
For me. Away! nor weep!
Thou canst not weep; but yet
May'st suffer more, not weeping: then forget
Her, whom the surges of the all-strangling deep
Can bring no pang like this. Fly! fly!
Being gone, 'twill be less difficult to die.

Japh. Oh say not so!

Father! and thou, archangel, thou!
Surely celestial mercy lurks below
That pure severe serenity of brow:
Let them not meet this sea without a shore,
Save in our ark, or let me be no more!

Noah. Peace, child of passion, peace!
If not within thy heart, yet with thy tongue
Do God no wrong!

Live as he wills it — die, when he ordains,
A righteous death, unlike the seed of Cain's.

Cease, or be sorrowful in silence; cease
To weary Heaven's ear with thy selfish plaint.
Wouldst thou have God commit a sin for thee?

Such would it be
To alter his intent

For a mere mortal sorrow. Be a man!
And bear what Adam's race must bear, and can.

Japh. Ay, father! but when they are gone,
And we are all alone,
Floating upon the azure desert, and
The depth beneath us hides our own dear land,
And dearer, silent friends and brethren, all
Buried in its immeasurable breast,
Who, who, our tears, our shrieks, shall then command?
Can we in desolation's peace have rest?
Oh God! be thou a God, and spare
Yet while 'tis time!

Renew not Adam's fall:

Mankind were then but twain,
But they are numerous now as are the waves
And the tremendous rain,
Whose drops shall be less thick than would their
graves,

Were graves permitted to the seed of Cain.

Noah. Silence, vain boy! each word of thine's a
crime.

Angel! forgive this stripling's fond despair.

Raph. Seraphs! these mortals speak in passion:
Ye!

Who are, or should be, passionless and pure,
May now return with me.

Sam. It may not be:

We have chosen, and will endure.

Raph. Say'st thou?

Aza. He hath said it, and I say, Amen!

Raph. Again!
Then from this hour,
Shorn as ye are of all celestial power,
And aliens from your God,
Farewell!

Japh. Alas! where shall they dwell?
Hark, hark! Deep sounds, and deeper still,
Are howling from the mountain's bosom:
There's not a breath of wind upon the hill,
Yet quivers every leaf, and drops each blossom:
Earth groans as if beneath a heavy load.

Noah. Hark, hark! the sea-birds cry!
In clouds they overspread the lurid sky,
And hover round the mountain, where before
Never a white wing, wetted by the wave,
Yet dared to soar,
Even when the waters waxed too fierce to brave.
Soon it shall be their only shore,
And then, no more!

Japh. The sun! the sun!
He riseth, but his better light is gone;
And a black circle, bound
His glaring disk around,
Proclaims earth's last of summer days hath shone!
The clouds return into the hues of night,
Save where their brazen-colored edges streak
The verge where brighter morns were wont to break.

Noah. And lo! yon flash of light,
The distant thunder's harbinger, appears!
It cometh! hence, away!

Leave to the elements their evil prey!
Hence to where our all-hallowed ark uprears
 Its safe and wreckless sides!

Japh. Oh, father, stay!

Leave not my Anah to the swallowing tides!

Noah. Must we not leave all life to such? Begone!

Japh. Not I.

Noah. Then die

 With them!

How darest thou look on that prophetic sky,
And seek to save what all things now condemn,
 In overwhelming unison

 With just Jehovah's wrath!

Japh. Can rage and justice join in the same path?

Noah. Blasphemer! darest thou murmur even
 now?

Raph. Patriarch, be still a father! smoothe thy
 brow:

Thy son, despite his folly, shall not sink:

He knows not what he says, yet shall not drink

 With sobs the salt foam of the swelling waters;

But be, when passion passeth, good as thou,

Nor perish like heaven's children with man's
 daughters. [unite

Aho. The tempest cometh; heaven and earth

 For the annihilation of all life.

 Unequal is the strife

Between our strength and the Eternal Might!

Sam. But ours is with thee; we will bear ye far
 To some untroubled star,

Where thou and Anah shalt partake our lot :

And if thou dost not weep for thy lost earth
Our forfeit heaven shall also be forgot.

Anah. Oh ! my dear father's tents, my place of
birth,
And mountains, land, and woods ! when ye are not,
Who shall dry up my tears !

Aza. Thy spirit-lord.
Fear not ; though we are shut from heaven,
Yet much is ours, whence we cannot be driven.

Raph. Rebel ! thy words are wicked, as thy
deeds
Shall henceforth be but weak : the flaming sword,
Which chased the first-born out of Paradise,
Still flashes in the angelic hands.

Aza. It cannot slay us : threaten dust with death,
And talk of weapons unto that which bleeds.
What are thy swords in our immortal eyes ?

Raph. The moment cometh to approve thy
strength ;
And learn at length
How vain to war with what thy God commands :
Thy former force was in thy faith.

Enter Mortals, flying for refuge.

Chorus of Mortals.

The heavens and earth are mingling—God ! oh God !
What have we done ? Yet spare !

Hark! even the forest beasts howl forth their prayer!

The dragon crawls from out his den,

To herd, in terror, innocent with men;

And the birds scream their agony through air.

Yet, yet, Jehovah! yet withdraw thy rod

Of wrath, and pity thine own world's despair!

Hear not man only but all nature plead!

Raph. Farewell, thou earth! ye wretched sons
of clay,

I cannot, must not, aid you. 'Tis decreed!

[*Exit* RAPHAEL.]

Japh. Some clouds sweep on as vultures for their
prey,

While others, fixed as rocks, await the word

At which their wrathful vials shall be poured.

No azure more shall robe the firmament,

Nor spangled stars be glorious: Death hath risen:

In the sun's place a pale and ghastly glare

Hath wound itself around the dying air.*

Aza. Come, Anah! quit this chaos-founded prison,
To which the elements again repair,
To turn it into what it was: beneath
The shelter of these wings thou shalt be safe,
As was the eagle's nestling once within

* [In his description of the deluge, which is a varied and recurring masterpiece,—(we hear it foretold, and we see it come,)—Lord Byron appears to us to have had an eye to Poussin's celebrated picture, with the sky hanging like a weight of lead upon the waters, the sun quenched and lurid, the rocks and trees upon them gloomily watching their fate, and a few figures struggling vainly with the overwhelming waves. — JEFFREY.]

Its mother's. — Let the coming chaos chafe
With all its elements! Heed not their din!
A brighter world than this, where thou shalt breathe
Ethereal life, will we explore:
These darkened clouds are not the only skies.

[AZAZIEL and SAMIASA fly off, and disappear
with ANAH and AHOLIBAMAH.

Japh. They are gone! They have disappeared
amidst the roar
Of the forsaken world; and never more,
Whether they live, or die with all earth's life,
Now near its last, can aught restore
Anah unto these eyes.*

Chorus of Mortals.

Oh son of Noah! mercy on thy kind!
What! wilt thou leave us all — all — *all* behind?
While safe amidst the elemental strife,
Thou sitt'st within thy guarded ark?
A Mother (offering her infant to JAPHET). Oh let
this child embark!
I brought him forth in woe,
But thought it joy
To see him to my bosom clinging so.
Why was he born?
What hath he done —
My unweaned son —
To move Jehovah's wrath or scorn?
What is there in this milk of mine, that death

* [The despair of the mortal lovers for the loss of their mortal mistresses is well and pathetically expressed. — JEFFREY.]

Should stir all heaven and earth up to destroy
 My boy,
And roll the waters o'er his placid breath?
Save him, thou seed of Seth!
Or cursed be — with him who made
Thee and thy race, for which we are betrayed!
 Japh. Peace! 'tis no hour for curses, but for
 prayer.

Chorus of Mortals.

For prayer!!!
And where
Shall prayer ascend,
When the swoln clouds unto the mountains bend
 And burst,
And gushing oceans every barrier rend,
 Until the very deserts know no thirst?
 Accursed
Be he who made thee and thy sire!
We deem our curses vain; we must expire;
 But as we know the worst,
Why should our hymn be raised, our knees be bent
Before the implacable Omnipotent,
Since we must fall the same?
If he hath made earth, let it be his shame,
 To make a world for torture. — Lo! they come,
The loathsome waters, in their rage!
And with their roar make wholesome nature dumb!
 The forest's trees (coeval with the hour
When Paradise upsprung,

Ere Eve gave Adam knowledge for her dower,
Or Adam his first hymn of slavery sung),

So massy, vast, yet green in their old age,
Are overtopped,
Their summer blossoms by the surges lopped,
Which rise, and rise, and rise.

Vainly we look up to the lowering skies —

They meet the seas,
And shut out God from our beseeching eyes.

Fly, son of Noah, fly! and take thine ease
In thine allotted ocean-tent;

And view, all floating o'er the element,
The corpses of the world of thy young days:

Then to Jehovah raise

Thy song of praise!

A Mortal. Blessed are the dead

Who die in the Lord!

And though the waters be o'er earth outspread,

Yet, as *his* word,

Be the decree adored!

He gave me life — he taketh but

The breath which is his own:

And though these eyes should be for ever shut,

Nor longer this weak voice before his throne

Be heard in supplicating tone,

Still blessed be the Lord

For what is past,

For that which is;

For all are his,

From first to last —

Time — space — eternity — life — death —
The vast known and immeasurable unknown.
He made, and can unmake ;
And shall *I*, for a little gasp of breath,
Blaspheme and groan ?
No ; let me die, as I have lived, in faith,
Nor quiver, though the universe may quake !

Chorus of Mortals.

Where shall we fly ?
Not to the mountains high ;
For now their torrents rush, with double roar,
To meet the ocean, which, advancing still,
Already grasps each drowning hill,
Nor leaves an unsearched cave.

Enter a Woman.

Woman. Oh, save me, save !
Our valley is no more :
My father and my father's tent,
My brethren and my brethren's herds,
The pleasant trees that o'er our noonday bent
And sent forth evening songs from sweetest birds.
The little rivulet which freshened all
Our pastures green,
No more are to be seen.
When to the mountain cliff I climbed this morn,
I turned to bless the spot,
And not a leaf appeared about to fall ; —
And now they are not ! —

Why was I born ?

Japh. To die ! in youth to die ;
And happier in that doom,
Than to behold the universal tomb
Which I

Am thus condemned to weep above in vain.

Why, when all perish, why must I remain ? *

* [This poem, or rather first part of a poem, for so it is stated to be, carries with it the peculiar impress of the writer's genius. It displays great vigor, and even a severity of style, throughout; which is another proof, if proof were needed, that elevation of writing is to be obtained only by a rigid regard to simplicity. It may be perused without shocking the feelings of the sensitive, or furnishing an object for the discriminating morality of the Lord Chancellor. Lord Byron has evidently endeavored to sustain the interest of this poem, by depicting natural, but deep drawn thoughts, in all their freshness and intensity, with as little fictitious aid as possible. Nothing is circumlocutory: there is no going about and about to enter at length upon his object, but he impetuously rushes into it at once. All over the poem there is a gloom cast suitable to the subject: an ominous fearful hue, like that which Poussin has flung over his inimitable picture of the Deluge. We see much evil, but we dread more. All is out of earthly keeping, as the events of the time are out of the course of nature. Man's wickedness, the perturbed creation, fear-struck mortals, demons passing to and fro in the earth, an overshadowing solemnity, and unearthly loves, form together the materials. That it has faults is obvious: prosaic passages, and too much tedious soliloquizing: but there is the vigor and force of Byron to fling into the scale against these: there is much of the sublime in description, and the beautiful in poetry. Prejudice, or ignorance, or both, may condemn it; but, while true poetical feeling exists amongst us, it will be pronounced not unworthy of its distinguished author. — CAMPBELL.

It appears that this is but the first part of a poem; but it is

[*The waters rise: Men fly in every direction; many are overtaken by the waves; the Chorus of Mortals disperses in search of safety up the mountains: Japhet remains upon a rock, while the Ark floats towards him in the distance.*

likewise a poem, and a fine one too, within itself. We confess that we see little or nothing objectionable in it, either as to theological orthodoxy, or general human feeling. It is solemn, lofty, fearful, wild, tumultuous, and shadowed all over with the darkness of a dreadful disaster. Of the angels who love the daughters of men we see little, and know less — and not too much of the love and passion of the fair lost mortals. The inconsolable despair preceding and accompanying an incomprehensible catastrophe pervades the whole composition; and its expression is made sublime by the noble strain of poetry in which it is said or sung. Sometimes there is heaviness — dullness — as if it were pressed in on purpose; intended, perhaps, to denote the occasional stupefaction, drowsiness, and torpidity of soul produced by the impending destruction upon the latest of the Antediluvians. But, on the whole, it is not unworthy of Lord Byron. — WILSON.

Lord Byron's "Mystery," with whatever crudeness and defects it is chargeable, certainly has more poetry and music in it than any of his dramatic writings since "Manfred;" and has also the peculiar merit of throwing us back, in a great degree, to the strange and preternatural time of which it professes to treat. It is truly, and in every sense of the word, a meeting of "heaven and earth;" angels are seen ascending and descending, and the windows of the sky are opened to deluge the face of nature. We have an impassioned picture of the strong and devoted attachment inspired into the daughters of men by angel forms, and have placed before us the emphatic picture of "woman wailing for her demon lover." There is a like conflict of the passions as of the elements — all wild, chaotic, uncontrollable, fatal; but there is a discordant harmony in all this — a keeping in the coloring and the time. In handling the unpol-

ished page, we look upon the world before the flood, and gaze upon a doubtful blank, with only a few straggling figures, part human and part divine; while, in the expression of the former, we read the fancies, ethereal and lawless, that lifted the eye of beauty to the skies, and, in the latter, the human passions that "drew angels down to earth." —JEFFREY.]

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED ;

A DRAMA.

(57)

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THIS production is founded partly on the story of a novel called "The Three Brothers,"* published many years ago, from which M. G. Lewis's "Wood Demon" was also taken — and partly on the "Faust" of the great Goethe. The present publication contains the two first Parts only, and the opening chorus of the third. The rest may perhaps appear hereafter.

* [The "Three Brothers" is a romance, published in 1803, the work of a Joshua Pickersgill, junior.]

INTRODUCTION

TO THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED.

THIS drama was begun at Pisa in 1821, but was not published till January, 1824. Mr. Medwin says: — “On my calling on Lord Byron one morning, he produced the ‘Deformed Transformed.’ Handing it to Shelley, as he was in the habit of doing his daily compositions, he said — ‘Shelley, I have been writing a Faustish kind of drama: tell me what you think of it.’ After reading it attentively, Shelley returned it. ‘Well,’ said Lord B. ‘how do you like it?’ ‘Least,’ replied he, ‘of any thing I ever saw of yours. It is a bad imitation of ‘Faust,’ and besides, there are two entire lines of Southey’s in it.’ Lord Byron changed color immediately, and asked hastily, ‘what lines?’ Shelley repeated,

‘And water shall see thee,
And fear thee, and flee thee.’

They are in the 'Curse of Kehama.' His Lordship instantly threw the poem into the fire. He seemed to feel no chagrin at seeing it consume—at least his countenance betrayed none, and his conversation became more gay and lively than usual. Whether it was hatred of Southey, or respect for Shelley's opinion, which made him commit the act that I considered a sort of suicide, was always doubtful to me. I was never more surprised than to see, two years afterwards, 'The Deformed Transformed' announced (supposing it to have perished at Pisa); but it seems that he must have had another copy of the manuscript, or that he had rewritten it perhaps, without changing a word, except omitting the Kehama lines. His memory was remarkably retentive of his own writings. I believe he could have quoted almost every line he ever wrote."

Mrs. Shelley says:—"This had long been a favorite subject with Lord Byron. I think that he mentioned it also in Switzerland. I copied it—he sending a portion of it at a time, as it was finished, to me. At this time he had a great horror of its being said that he plagiarized, or that he studied for ideas, and wrote with difficulty. Thus, he gave Shelley Aiken's edition of the British Poets, that it might not be found in his house by some English loungeur, and reported home: thus, too, he always dated when he began and when he ended a poem, to prove hereafter how quickly it

was done. I do not think that he altered a line in this drama after he had once written it down. He composed and corrected in his mind. I do not know how he meant to finish it; but he said himself that the whole conduct of the story was already conceived. It was at this time that a brutal paragraph alluding to his lameness appeared, which he repeated to me; lest I should hear it first from some one else. No action of Lord Byron's life — scarce a line he has written — but was influenced by his personal defect."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

STRANGER, *afterwards* CÆSAR.

ARNOLD.

BOURBON.

PHILIBERT.

CELLINI.

BERTHA.

OLIMPIA.

Spirits, Soldiers, Citizens of Rome, Priests, Peasants, etc

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED.

PART I.

SCENE I.

A Forest.

Enter ARNOLD *and his mother* BERTHA.

Bert. OUT, hunchback!

Arn. I was born so, mother!*

Bert. Out,
Thou incubus! Thou nightmare! Of seven sons,
The sole abortion!

Arn. Would that I had been so,
And never seen the light!

Bert. I would so too!
But as thou *hast* — hence, hence — and do thy best!

* [Lord Byron's own mother, when in ill humor with him, used to make the deformity in his foot the subject of taunts and reproaches. She would (we quote from a letter written by one of her relations in Scotland) pass from passionate caresses to the repulsion of actual disgust; then devour him with kisses again, and swear his eyes were as beautiful as his father's. — QUAR. REV.]

That back of thine may bear its burden ; 't is
More high, if not so broad as that of others.

Arn. It *bears* its burden ;—but, my heart ! Will it
Sustain that which you lay upon it, mother ?
I love, or, at the least, I loved you : nothing
Save you, in nature, can love aught like me.
You nursed me — do not kill me !

Bert. Yes — I nursed thee,
Because thou wert my first-born, and I knew not
If there would be another unlike thee,
That monstrous sport of nature. But get hence,
And gather wood !

Arn. I will : but when I bring it,
Speak to me kindly. Though my brothers are
So beautiful and lusty, and as free
As the free chase they follow, do not spurn me :
Our milk has been the same.

Bert. As is the hedgehog's,
Which sucks at midnight from the wholesome
dam

Of the young bull, until the milkmaid finds
The nipple next day sore and udder dry.*
Call not thy brothers brethren ! Call me not
Mother ; for if I brought thee forth, it was
As foolish hens at times hatch vipers, by
Sitting upon strange eggs. Out, urchin, out !

[*Exit BERTHA.*

* [This is now believed to be a vulgar error ; the smallness of the animal's mouth rendering it incapable of the mischief laid to its charge.]

Arn. (solus). Oh mother! — She is gone, and I
Her bidding; — wearily but willingly [must do
I would fulfil it, could I only hope
A kind word in return. What shall I do?

[*ARNOLD begins to cut wood: in doing this he
wounds one of his hands.*

My labor for the day is over now.

Accursed be this blood that flows so fast;

For double curses will be my meed now

At home — What home? I have no home, no kin,

No kind — not made like other creatures, or

To share their sports or pleasures. Must I bleed too

Like them? Oh that each drop which falls to earth

Would rise a snake to sting them, as they have stung

Or that the devil, to whom they liken me, [me!

Would aid his likeness! If I must partake

His form, why not his power? Is it because

I have not his will too? For one kind word

From her who bore me would still reconcile me

Even to this hateful aspect. Let me wash

The wound.

[*ARNOLD goes to a spring, and stoops to wash
his hand: he starts back.*

They are right; and Nature's mirror shows me,

What she hath made me. I will not look on it

Again, and scarce dare think on't. Hideous wretch

That I am! The very waters mock me with

My horrid shadow — like a demon placed

Deep in the fountain to scare back the cattle

From drinking therein.

[*He pauses.*

And shall I live on,
A burden to the earth, myself, and shame
Unto what brought me into life! Thou blood,
Which flowest so freely from a scratch, let me
Try if thou wilt not in a fuller stream
Pour forth my woes for ever with thyself
On earth, to which I will restore at once
This hateful compound of her atoms, and
Resolve back to her elements, and take
The shape of any reptile save myself,
And make a world for myriads of new worms!
This knife! now let me prove if it will sever
This withered slip of nature's nightshade — my
Vile form — from the creation, as it hath
The green bough from the forest.

[ARNOLD places the knife in the ground, with
the point upwards.

Now 't is set,

And I can fall upon it. Yet one glance
On the fair day, which sees no foul thing like
Myself, and the sweet sun which warmed me, but
In vain. The birds — how joyously they sing!
So let them, for I would not be lamented:
But let their merriest notes be Arnold's knell;
The fallen leaves my monument; the murmur
Of the near fountain my sole elegy.
Now, knife, stand firmly, as I fain would fall!

[As he rushes to throw himself upon the knife, his
eye is suddenly caught by the fountain, which
seems in motion.

The fountain moves without a wind: but shall
The ripple of a spring change my resolve?
No. Yet it moves again! The waters stir,
Not as with air, but by some subterranean
And rocking power of the internal world.
What's here? A mist! No more? —

[*A cloud comes from the fountain. He stands gazing upon it; it is dispelled, and a tall black man comes towards him.*]

Arn. What would you? Speak!
Spirit or man?

Stran. As man is both, why not
Say both in one?

Arn. ' Your form is man's, and yet
You may be devil.

Stran. So many men are that
Which is so called or thought, that you may add
me

To which you please, without much wrong to either.
But come : you wish to kill yourself ; — pursue
Your purpose.

Arn. You have interrupted me.

Stran. What is that resolution which can e'er
Be interrupted? If I be the devil
You deem, a single moment would have made you
Mine, and for ever, by your suicide;
And yet my coming saves you.

Arn. I said not
 You *were* the demon, but that your approach
 Was like one.

Stran. Unless you keep company
 With him (and you seem scarce used to such high
 Society) you can't tell how he approaches ;
 And for his aspect, look upon the fountain,
 And then on me, and judge which of us twain
 Looks likest what the boors believe to be
 Their cloven-footed terror.

Arn. Do you — dare *you*
 To taunt me with my born deformity ?

Stran. Were I to taunt a buffalo with this
 Cloven foot of thine, or the swift dromedary
 With thy sublime of humps, the animals
 Would revel in the compliment. And yet
 Both beings are more swift, more strong, more
 mighty
 In action and endurance than thyself,
 And all the fierce and fair of the same kind
 With thee. Thy form is natural: 't was only
 Nature's mistaken largess to bestow
 The gifts which are of others upon man.

Arn. Give me the strength then of the buffalo's
 foot,
 When he spurs high the dust, beholding his
 Near enemy ; or let me have the long
 And patient swiftness of the desert-ship,
 The helmless dromedary ! — and I'll bear
 Thy fiendish sarcasm with a saintly patience.

Stran. I will.

Arn. (*with surprise*). Thou *canst* ?

Stran. Perhaps. Would you aught else ?

Arn. Thou mockest me.

Stran. Not I. Why should I mock
What all are mocking? That's poor sport, methinks.
To talk to thee in human language (for
Thou canst not yet speak mine), the forester
Hunts not the wretched coney, but the boar
Or wolf, or lion, leaving paltry game
To petty burghers, who leave once a year
Their walls, to fill their household caldrons with
Such scullion prey. The meanest gibe at thee, —
Now *I* can mock the mightiest.

Arn. Then waste not
Thy time on me: I seek thee not.

Stran. Your thoughts
Are not far from me. Do not send me back:
I am not so easily recalled to do
Good service.

Arn. What wilt thou do for me?

Stran. Change
Shapes with you, if you will, since yours so irks you;
Or form you to your wish in any shape.

Arn. Oh! then you are indeed the demon, for
Nought else would wittingly wear mine.

Stran. I'll show thee
The brightest which the world e'er bore, and give
thee
Thy choice.

Arn. On what condition?

Stran. There's a question!
An hour ago you would have given your soul

To look like other men, and now you pause
To wear the form of heroes.

Arn. No; I will not.
I must not compromise my soul.

Stran. What soul,
Worth naming so, would dwell in such a carcass?

Arn. 'Tis an aspiring one, whate'er the tene-
ment
In which it is misloded. But name your compact:
Must it be signed in blood?

Stran. Not in your own.

Arn. Whose blood then?

Stran. We will talk of that hereafter.
But I'll be moderate with you, for I see
Great things within you. You shall have no bond
But your own will, no contract save your deeds.
Are you content?

Arn. I take thee at thy word.

Stran. Now then!—

[*The Stranger approaches the fountain, and
turns to ARNOLD.*

A little of your blood.

Arn. For what?

Stran. To mingle with the magic of the waters,
And make the charm effective.

Arn. (*holding out his wounded arm*). Take it all.

Stran. Not now. A few drops will suffice for this.

[*The Stranger takes some of ARNOLD'S blood in
his hand, and casts it into the fountain.*

Stran. Shadows of beauty!
Shadows of power!

Rise to your duty —
This is the hour!
Walk lovely and pliant
From the depth of this fountain,
As the cloud-shapen giant
Bestrides the Hartz Mountain.*
Come as ye were,
That our eyes may behold
The model in air
Of the form I will mould,
Bright as the Iris
When ether is spanned;—
Such *his* desire is, [*Pointing to ARNOLD.*
Such my command!
Demons heroic —
Demons who wore
The form of the stoic
Or sophist of yore —
Or the shape of each victor,
From Macedon's boy
To each high Roman's picture,
Who breathed to destroy —
Shadows of beauty!
Shadows of power!

* This is a well-known German superstition — a gigantic shadow produced by reflection on the Brocken. [The Brocken is the name of the loftiest of the Hartz mountains, in the kingdom of Hanover. From the earliest periods of authentic history, the Brocken has been the seat of the marvellous. The spectres are merely shadows of the observer projected on dense vapor or thin fleecy clouds which have the power of reflecting much light.]

Up to your duty —
This is the hour!

[*Various Phantoms arise from the waters, and pass in succession before the Stranger and ARNOLD.*

Arn. What do I see?

Stran. The black-eyed Roman, with
The eagle's beak between those eyes which ne'er
Beheld a conqueror, or looked along
The land he made not Rome's, while Rome became
His, and all theirs who heired his very name.

Arn. The phantom's bald; my quest is beauty.
Could I

Inherit but his fame with his defects!

Stran. His brow was girt with laurels more than
hairs.

You see his aspect — choose it, or reject.
I can but promise you his form; his fame
Must be long sought and fought for.

Arn. I will fight too,
But not as a mock Cæsar. Let him pass;
His aspect may be fair, but suits me not.

Stran. Then you are far more difficult to please
Than Cato's sister, or than Brutus' mother,
Or Cleopatra at sixteen — an age
When love is not less in the eye than heart.
But be it so! Shadow, pass on!

[*The phantom of Julius Cæsar disappears*

Arn. And can it
Be, that the man who shook the earth is gone,
And left no footstep?

Stran. There you err. His substance
Left graves enough, and woes enough, and fame
More than enough to track his memory ;
But for his shadow, 'tis no more than yours,
Except a little longer and less crooked
I' the sun. Behold another !

[*A second phantom passes.*

Arn. Who is he?

Stran. He was the fairest and the bravest of Athenians. Look upon him well.

Arn. He is
More lovely than the last. How beautiful!*

* ["Upon the whole, it may be doubted whether there be a name of antiquity which comes down with such a general charm as that of Alcibiades. Why? I cannot answer. Who can?" † — *Byron's Diary.*]

† One cannot help being struck with Lord Byron's choice of a favorite among the heroic names of antiquity. The man who was educated by Pericles, and who commanded the admiration as well as the affection of Socrates; whose gallantry and boldness were always as undisputed as the pre-eminent graces of his person and manners; who lived at *forty-five*, after having been successively the delight and hero of Athens, of Sparta, of Persia; — this most versatile of great men has certainly left to the world a very splendid reputation. But his fame is stained with the recollections of a most profligate and debauched course of private life, and of the most complete and flagrant contempt of public principle; and it is to be hoped that there are not many men who could gravely give to the name of Alcibiades a preference, on the whole, over such an one as that of an Epaminondas or a Leonidas, or even of a Miltiades or a Hannibal. But the career of Alcibiades was *romantic*: every great event in which he had a share has the air of a personal adventure; and, whatever might be said of his want of principle, moral and political, nobody ever doubted the greatness of his powers and the brilliancy of his accomplishments. By the gift of nature, the handsomest creature of his time, and the possessor of a very extraordinary genius, he was,

Stran. Such was the curled son of Clinias; —
wouldst thou
Invest thee with his form?

Arn. Would that I had
Been born with it! But since I may choose further,
I will *look* further.

[*The shade of Alcibiades disappears.*

Stran. Lo! behold again!

Arn. What! that low, swarthy, short-nosed, round-eyed satyr,
With the wide nostrils and Silenus' aspect,
The splay feet and low stature! * I had better
Remain that which I am.

Stran. And yet he was
The earth's perfection of all mental beauty,
And personification of all virtue.
But you reject him?

Arn. If his form could bring me
That which redeemed it — no.

* ["The outside of Socrates was that of a satyr and buffoon, but his soul was all virtue, and from within him came such divine and pathetic things, as pierced the heart, and drew tears from the hearers." — PLATO.]

by accidents or by fits, a soldier, — a hero, — an orator, — and even, it should seem, a philosopher ; but he played these parts only because he wished it to be thought that there was no part which he could not play. He thought of nothing but himself. His vanity entirely commanded the direction of his genius, and could even make him abandon occasionally his voluptuousness for the very opposite extreme ; which last circumstance, by the way, was probably one of those that had hit Lord Byron's fancy — as indeed it may be suspected to have influenced his behavior. — LOCKHART.

Stran. I have no power
To promise that; but you may try, and find it
Easier in such a form, or in your own.

Arn. No. I was not born for philosophy,
Though I have that about me which has need on't.
Let him fleet on.

Stran. Be air, thou hemlock-drinker!
[*The shadow of Socrates disappears: another rises*

Arn. What's here? whose broad brow and whose
curly beard
And manly aspect look like Hercules,
Save that his jocund eye hath more of Bacchus
Than the sad purger of the infernal world,
Leaning dejected on his club of conquest,
As if he knew the worthlessness of those
For whom he had fought.

Stran. It was the man who lost
The ancient world for love.

Arn. I cannot blame him,
Since I have risked my soul because I find not
That which he exchanged the earth for.

Stran. Since so far
You seem congenial, will you wear his features?

Arn. No. As you leave me choice, I am difficult,
If but to see the heroes I should ne'er
Have seen else on this side of the dim shore
Whence they float back before us.

Stran. Hence, triumvir!
Thy Cleopatra's waiting.

[*The shade of Antony disappears: another rises.*

Arn. Who is this?

Who truly looketh like a demigod,
Blooming and bright, with golden hair, and stature,
If not more high than mortal, yet immortal
In all that nameless bearing of his limbs,
Which he wears as the sun his rays — a something
Which shines from him, and yet is but the flashing
Emanation of a thing more glorious still.
Was *he e'er human only*? *

Stran. Let the earth speak,
If there be atoms of him left, or even
Of the more solid gold that formed his urn.

Arn. Who was this glory of mankind?

Stran. The shame
Of Greece in peace, her thunderbolt in war —
Demetrius the Macedonian, and
Taker of cities.

Arn. Yet one shadow more.

Stran. (*addressing the shadow*). Get thee to
Lamia's lap!

[*The shade of Demetrius Poliorcetes vanishes :
another rises.*

I'll fit you still,
Fear not, my hunchback : if the shadows of
That which existed please not your nice taste,

* [The beauty and mien of Demetrius Poliorcetes were so inimitable, that no statuary or painter could hit off a likeness. His countenance had a mixture of grace and dignity, and was at once amiable and awful, and the unsubdued and eager air of youth was blended with the majesty of the hero and the king. PLUTARCH.]

I'll animate the ideal marble, till
Your soul be reconciled to her new garment.

Arn. Content! I will fix here.

Stran. I must commend
Your choice. The godlike son of the sea-goddess,
The unshorn boy of Peleus, with his locks
As beautiful and clear as the amber waves
Of rich Pactolus, rolled o'er sands of gold,
Softened by intervening crystal, and
Rippled like flowing waters by the wind,
All vowed to Sperchius as they were — behold them!
And *him* — as he stood by Polixena,
With sanctioned and with softened love, before
The altar, gazing on his Trojan bride,
With some remorse within for Hector slain
And Priam weeping, mingled with deep passion
For the sweet downcast virgin, whose young hand
Trembled in *his* who slew her brother. So
He stood i' the temple! Look upon him as
Greece looked her last upon her best, the instant
Ere Paris' arrow flew.

Arn. I gaze upon him
As if I were his soul, whose form shall soon
Envelope mine.

Stran. You have done well. The greatest
Deformity should only barter with
The extremest beauty, if the proverb's true
Of mortals, that extremes meet.

Arn. Come! Be quick!
I am impatient.

Stran. As a youthful beauty
Before her glass. *You both* see what is not,
But dream it is what must be.

Arn. Must I wait?

Stran. No; that were a pity. But a word or two:
His stature is twelve cubits; would you so far
Outstep these times, and be a Titan? Or
(To talk canonically) wax a son
Of Anak?

Arn. Why not?

Stran. Glorious ambition!
I love thee most in dwarfs! A mortal of
Philistine stature would have gladly pared
His own Goliath down to a slight David:
But thou, my manikin, wouldst soar a show
Rather than hero. Thou shalt be indulged,
If such be thy desire; and yet, by being
A little less removed from present men
In figure, thou canst sway them more; for all
Would rise against thee now, as if to hunt
A new-found mammoth; and their cursed engines,
Their culverins, and so forth, would find way
Through our friend's armor there, with greater ease
Than the adulterer's arrow through his heel,
Which Thetis had forgotten to baptize
In Styx.

Arn. Then let it be as thou deem'st best.

Stran. Thou shalt be beauteous as the thing thou
seest,
And strong as what it was, and ——

Arn. I ask not
For valor, since deformity is daring.
It is its essence to o’ertake mankind
By heart and soul, and make itself the equal —
Ay, the superior of the rest. There is
A spur in its halt movements, to become
All that the others cannot, in such things
As still are free to both, to compensate
For stepdame Nature’s avarice at first.
They woo with fearless deeds the smiles of fortune,
And oft, like Timour the lame Tartar, win them.

Stran. Well spoken! And thou doubtless wilt
remain
Formed as thou art. I may dismiss the mould
Of shadow, which must turn to flesh, to incase
This daring soul, which could achieve no less
Without it.

Arn. Had no power presented me
The possibility of change, I would
Have done the best which spirit may to make
Its way with all deformity’s dull, deadly,
Discouraging weight upon me, like a mountain,
In feeling, on my heart as on my shoulders —
An hateful and unsightly molehill to
The eyes of happier men. I would have looked
On beauty in that sex which is the type
Of all we know or dream of beautiful
Beyond the world they brighten, with a sigh —
Not of love, but despair; nor sought to win,
Though to a heart all love, what could not love me
In turn, because of this vile crooked clog,

Which makes me lonely. Nay, I could have borne
It all, had not my mother spurned me from her.
The she-bear licks her cubs into a sort
Of shape ; — my dam beheld my shape was hopeless.
Had she exposed me, like the Spartan, ere
I knew the passionate part of life, I had
Been a clod of the valley, — happier nothing
Than what I am. But even thus, the lowest,
Ugliest, and meanest of mankind, what courage
And perseverance could have done, perchance
Had made me something — as it has made heroes
Of the same mould as mine. You lately saw me
Master of my own life, and quick to quit it ;
And he who is so is the master of
Whatever dreads to die.

Stran.

Decide between

What you have been, or will be.

Arn.

I have done so.

You have opened brighter prospects to my eyes,
And sweeter to my heart. As I am now,
I might be feared, admired, respected, loved
Of all save those next to me, of whom I
Would be beloved. As thou showest me
A choice of forms, I take the one I view.
Haste ! haste !

Stran.

And what shall *I* wear ?

Arn.

Surely he

Who can command all forms will choose the highest,
Something superior even to that which was
Pelides now before us. Perhaps *his*
Who slew him, that of Paris : or — still higher —

The poet's god, clothed in such limbs as are
Themselves a poetry.

Stran. Less will content me ;
For I, too, love a change.

Arn. Your aspect is
Dusky, but not uncomely.

Stran. If I chose,
I might be whiter ; but I have a penchant
For black — it is so honest, and besides
Can neither blush with shame nor pale with fear ;
But I have worn it long enough of late,
And now I'll take your figure.

Arn. Mine !

Stran. Yes. You
Shall change with Thetis' son, and I with Bertha,
Your mother's offspring. People have their tastes ;
You have yours — I mine.

Arn. Despatch ! despatch !

Stran. Even so.

[*The Stranger takes some earth and moulds it
along the turf, and then addresses the phan-
tom of Achilles.*

Beautiful shadow

Of Thetis's boy !

Who sleeps in the meadow

Whose grass grows o'er Troy :

From the red earth, like Adam,*

Thy likeness I shape,

* Adam means "*red earth*," from which the first man was formed.

As the being who made him,
Whose actions I ape.
Thou clay, be all glowing,
Till the rose in his cheek
Be as fair as, when blowing,
It wears its first streak!
Ye violets, I scatter,
Now turn into eyes!
And thou, sunshiny water,
Of blood take the guise!
Let these hyacinth boughs
Be his long flowing hair,
And wave o'er his brows,
As thou wavest in air!
Let his heart be this marble
I tear from the rock!
But his voice as the warble
Of birds on yon oak!
Let his flesh be the purest
Of mould, in which grew
The lily-root surest,
And drank the best dew!
Let his limbs be the lightest
Which clay can compound,
And his aspect the brightest
On earth to be found!
Elements, near me,
Be mingled and stirred,
Know me, and hear me,
And leap to my word!

Sunbeams, awaken
This earth's animation!
'Tis done! He hath taken
His stand in creation!

[ARNOLD falls senseless; his soul passes into the shape of Achilles, which rises from the ground; while the phantom has disappeared, part by part, as the figure was formed from the earth.

Arn. (in his new form). I love, and I shall be
beloved! Oh life!

At last I feel thee! Glorious spirit!

Stran.

Stop!

What shall become of your abandoned garment,
Your hump, and lump, and clod of ugliness,
Which late you wore, or were?

Arn.

Who cares? Let wolves
And vultures take it, if they will.

Stran.

And if

They do, and are not scared by it, you'll say
It must be peace-time, and no better fare
Abroad i' the fields.

Arn.

Let us but leave it there;
No matter what becomes on't.

Stran.

That's ungracious,

If not ungrateful. Whatsoe'er it be,
It hath sustained your soul full many a day.

Arn. Ay, as the dunghill may conceal a gem
Which is now set in gold, as jewels should be.

Stran. But if I give another form, it must be

By fair exchange, not robbery. For they
Who make men without women's aid have long
Had patents for the same, and do not love
Your interlopers. The devil may take men,
Not make them, — though he reaped the benefit
Of the original workmanship: — and therefore
Some one must be found to assume the shape
You have quitted.

Arn. Who would do so?

Stran. That I know not,
And therefore I must.

Arn. You!

Stran. I said it ere
You inhabited your present dome of beauty.

Arn. True. I forget all things in the new joy
Of this immortal change.

Stran. In a few moments
I will be as you were, and you shall see
Yourself for ever by you, as your shadow.

Arn. I would be spared this.

Stran. But it cannot be.
What! shrink already, being what you are.
From seeing what you were?

Arn. Do as thou wilt.

Stran. (to the late form of ARNOLD, extended on
the earth).

Clay! not dead, but soul-less!

Though no man would choose thee,

An immortal no less

Deigns not to refuse thee.

Clay thou art ; and unto spirit
All clay is of equal merit.
Fire ! *without* which naught can live ;
Fire ! but *in* which naught can live,
 Save the fabled salamander,
 Or immortal souls, which wander,
Praying what doth not forgive,
Howling for a drop of water,
 Burning in a quenchless lot :
Fire ! the only element
 Where nor fish, beast, bird, nor worm,
 Save the worm which dieth not,
 Can preserve a moment's form,
But must with thyself be blent :
Fire ! man's safeguard and his slaughter :
Fire ! Creation's first-born daughter,
 And Destruction's threatened son,
 When heaven with the world hath done :
Fire ! assist me to renew
Life in what lies in my view
 Stiff and cold !

His resurrection rests with me and you !
One little, marshy spark of flame —
And he again shall seem the same ;
 But I his spirit's place shall hold !

[*An ignis-fatuus flits through the wood and rests
on the brow of the body. The Stranger dis-
appears : the body rises.*]

Arn. (*in his new form*). Oh ! horrible !

Stran. (*in ARNOLD's late shape*). What ! tremblest
thou ?

Arn. Not so —
I merely shudder. Where is fled the shape
Thou lately worest?

Stran. To the world of shadows.
But let us thread the present. Whither wilt thou?

Arn. Must thou be my companion?

Stran. Wherefore not?
Your betters keep worse company.

Arn. *My* betters!

Stran. Oh! you wax proud, I see, of your new
form:

I'm glad of that. Ungrateful too! That's well;
You improve apace; — two changes in an instant,
And you are old in the world's ways already.
But bear with me: indeed you'll find me useful
Upon your pilgrimage. But come, pronounce
Where shall we now be errant?

Arn. Where the world
Is thickest, that I may behold it in
Its workings.

Stran. That's to say, where there is war
And woman in activity. Let's see!
Spain — Italy — the new Atlantic world —
Afric, with all its Moors. In very truth,
There is small choice: the whole race are just now
Tugging as usual at each other's hearts.

Arn. I have heard great things of Rome.

Stran. A goodly choice —
And scarce a better to be found on earth,
Since Sodom was put out. The field is wide too;

For now the Frank, and Hun, and Spanish scion
Of the old Vandals, 'are at play along
The sunny shores of the world's garden.

Arn. How
Shall we proceed?

Stran. Like gallants, on good coursers.
What ho! my chargers! Never yet were better,
Since Phaeton was upset into the Po.
Our pages too!

Enter two Pages, with four coal-black horses.

Arn. A noble sight!

Stran. And of
A nobler breed. Match me in Barbary,
Or your Kochlini race of Araby,
With these!

Arn. The mighty steam, which volumes high
From their proud nostrils, burns the very air;
And sparks of flame, like dancing fire-flies, wheel
Around their manes, as common insects swarm
Round common steeds towards sunset.

Stran. Mount, my lord:
They and I are your servitors.

Arn. And these
Our dark-eyed pages — what may be their names?

Stran. You shall baptize them.

Arn. What! in holy water?

Stran. Why not? The deeper sinner, better
saint. [demons.

Arn. They are beautiful, and cannot, sure, be

Stran. True ; the devil's always ugly ; and your
beauty
Is never diabolical.

Arn. I'll call him
Who bears the golden horn, and wears such
bright
And blooming aspect, *Huon* ; for he looks
Like to the lovely boy lost in the forest,
And never found till now. And for the other
And darker, and more thoughtful, who smiles not,
But looks as serious though serene as night,
He shall be *Memnon*, from the Ethiop king
Whose statue turns a harper once a day.
And you ?

Stran. I have ten thousand names, and twice
As many attributes ; but as I wear
A human shape, will take a human name.

Arn. More human than the shape (though it was
mine once)
I trust.

Stran. Then call me Cæsar.

Arn. Why, that name
Belongs to empires, and has been but borne
By the world's lords.

Stran. And therefore fittest for
The devil in disguise — since so you deem me,
Unless you call me pope instead.

Arn. Well, then,
Cæsar thou shalt be. For myself, my name
Shall be plain Arnold still.

Cæs. We'll add a title —
“Count Arnold:” it hath no ungracious sound,
And will look well upon a billet-doux.

Arn. Or in an order for a battle-field.

Cæs. (sings). To horse! to horse! my coal-black
steed

Paws the ground and snuffs the air!
There's not a foal of Arab's breed
More knows whom he must bear;
On the hill he will not tire,
Swifter as it waxes higher;
In the marsh he will not slacken,
On the plain be overtaken;
In the wave he will not sink,
Nor pause at the brook's side to drink;
In the race he will not pant,
In the combat he'll not faint;
On the stones he will not stumble,
Time nor toil shall make him humble;
In the stall he will not stiffen,
But be winged as a griffin,
Only flying with his feet:
And will not such a voyage be sweet?
Merrily! merrily! never unsound,
Shall our bonny black horses skim over the
ground!

From the Alps to the Caucasus, ride we, or fly!
For we'll leave them behind in the glance of an eye.

[*They mount their horses, and disappear.*]

SCENE II.

A Camp before the Walls of Rome.

ARNOLD and CÆSAR.

Cæs. You are well entered now.

Arn. Ay ; but my path
Has been o'er carcasses : mine eyes are full
Of blood.

Cæs. Then wipe them, and see clearly. Why !
Thou art a conqueror ; the chosen knight
And free companion of the gallant Bourbon,
Late constable of France : and now to be
Lord of the city which hath been earth's lord
Under its emperors, and — changing sex,
Not sceptre, an hermaphrodite of empire —
Lady of the old world.

Arn. How *old*? What ! are there
New worlds ?

Cæs. To *you*. You'll find there are such shortly,
By its rich harvests, new disease, and gold ;
From one *half* of the world named a *whole* new one,
Because you know no better than the dull
And dubious notice of your eyes and ears.

Arn. I'll trust them.

Cæs. Do ! They will deceive you sweetly,
And that is better than the bitter truth.

Arn. Dog !

Cæs. Man!

Arn. Devil!

Cæs. Your obedient humble servant.

Arn. Say *master* rather. Thou hast lured me on,
Through scenes of blood and lust, till I am here.

Cæs. And where wouldst *thou* be?

Arn. Oh, at peace—in peace.

Cæs. And where is that which is so? From the
star

To the winding worm, all life is motion; and
In life *commotion* is the extremest point
Of life. The planet wheels till it becomes
A comet, and destroying as it sweeps
The stars, goes out. The poor worm winds its way,
Living upon the death of other things,
But still, like them, must live and die, the subject
Of something which has made it live and die.
You must obey what all obey, the rule
Of fixed necessity: against her edict
Rebellion prospers not.

Arn. And when it prospers ——

Cæs. 'Tis no rebellion.

Arn. Will it prosper now?

Cæs. The Bourbon hath given orders for the
And by the dawn there will be work. [assault,

Arn. Alas!

And shall the city yield? I see the giant
Abode of the true God, and his true saint,
Saint Peter, rear its dome and cross into
That sky whence Christ ascended from the cross,

Which his blood made a badge of glory and
Of joy (as once of torture unto him,
God and God's Son, man's sole and only refuge).

Cæs. 'Tis there, and shall be.

Arn.

What?

Cæs.

The crucifix

Above, and many altar shrines below.

Also some culverins upon the walls,

And harquebusses, and what not; besides

The men who are to kindle them to death

Of other men.

Arn.

And those scarce mortal arches,

Pile above pile of everlasting wall,

The theatre where emperors and their subjects

(Those subjects *Romans*) stood at gaze upon

The battles of the monarchs of the wild

And wood, the lion and his tusky rebels

Of the then untamed desert, brought to joust

In the arena (as right well they might,

When they had left no human foe unconquered);

Made even the forest pay its tribute of

Life to their amphitheatre, as well

As Dacia men to die the eternal death

For a sole instant's pastime, and "Pass on

To a new gladiator!" — Must it fall?

Cæs. The city, or the amphitheatre?

The church, or one, or all? for you confound

Both them and me.

Arn.

To-morrow sounds the assault

With the first cock-crow.

Cæs. Which, if it end with
The evening's first nightingale, will be
Something new in the annals of great sieges ;
For men must have their prey after long toil.

Arn. The sun goes down as calmly, and perhaps
More beautifully, than he did on Rome
On the day Remus leapt her wall.

Cæs. I saw him.

Arn. You !

Cæs. Yes, sir. You forget I am or was
Spirit, till I took up with your cast shape
And a worse name. I'm Cæsar and a hunch-back
Now. Well ! the first of Cæsars was a bald-head,
And loved his laurels better as a wig
(So history says) than as a glory.* Thus
The world runs on, but we'll be merry still.
I saw your Romulus (simple as I am)
Slay his own twin, quick-born of the same womb,
Because he leapt a ditch ('t was then no wall,
Whate'er it now be) ; and Rome's earliest cement
Was brother's blood ; and if its native blood
Be spilt till the choked Tiber be as red
As e'er 't was yellow, it will never wear
The deep hue of the ocean and the earth,

* [Suetonius relates of Julius Cæsar, that his baldness gave him much uneasiness, having often found himself, upon that account, exposed to the ridicule of his enemies ; and that, therefore, of all the honors conferred upon him by the senate and people, there was none which he either accepted or used with so much pleasure as the right of wearing constantly a laurel crown.]

Which the great robber sons of fratricide
Have made their never-ceasing scene of slaughter
For ages.

Arn. But what have these done, their far
Remote descendants, who have lived in peace,
The peace of heaven, and in her sunshine of
Piety?

Cæs. And what had *they* done, whom the old
Romans o'erswept? — Hark!

Arn. They are soldiers singing
A reckless roundelay, upon the eve
Of many deaths, it may be of their own.

Cæs. And why should they not sing as well as
swans?

They are black ones, to be sure.

Arn. So, you are learned,
I see, too?

Cæs. In my grammar, certes. I
Was educated for a monk of all times,
And once I was well versed in the forgotten
Etruscan letters, and — were I so minded —
Could make their hieroglyphics plainer than
Your alphabet.

Arn. And wherefore do you not?

Cæs. It answers better to resolve the alphabet
Back into hieroglyphics. Like your statesman,
And prophet, pontiff, doctor, alchymist,
Philosopher, and what not, they have built
More Babels, without new dispersion, than
The stammering young ones of the flood's dull ooze,

Who failed and fled each other. Why? why, marry,
Because no man could understand his neighbor.

They are wiser now, and will not separate
For nonsense. Nay, it is their brotherhood,
Their Shibboleth, their Koran, Talmud, their
Cabala; their best brick-work, wherewithal
They build more ——

Arn. (interrupting him). Oh, thou everlasting
sneerer!

Be silent! How the soldiers' rough strain seems
Softened by distance to a hymn-like cadence!
Listen!

Cæs. Yes. I have heard the angels sing.

Arn. And demons howl.

Cæs. And man too. Let us listen:
I love all music.

Song of the Soldiers within.

The black bands came over
The Alps and their snow;
With Bourbon, the rover,
They passed the broad Po.
We have beaten all foemen,
We have captured a king,
We have turned back on no men,
And so let us sing!
Here's the Bourbon for ever!
Though pennyless all,
We'll have one more endeavor
At yonder old wall.

With the Bourbon we 'll gather
At day-dawn before
The gates, and together
Or break or climb o'er
The wall: on the ladder
As mounts each firm foot,
Our shout shall grow gladder,
And death only be mute.
With the Bourbon we 'll mount o'er
The walls of old Rome,
And who then shall count o'er
The spoils of each dome?
Up! up with the lily!
And down with the keys!
In old Rome, the seven-hilly,
We 'll revel at ease.
Her streets shall be gory,
Her Tiber all red,
And her temples so hoary
Shall clang with our tread.
Oh, the Bourbon! the Bourbon!
The Bourbon for aye!
Of our song bear the burden!
And fire, fire away!
With Spain for the vanguard,
Our varied host comes;
And next to the Spaniard
Beat Germany's drums;
And Italy's lances
Are couched at their mother;

But our leader from France is,
Who warred with his brother.
Oh, the Bourbon! the Bourbon!
Sans country or home,
We'll follow the Bourbon,
To plunder old Rome.

Cæs. An indifferent song
For those within the walls, methinks, to hear.

Arn. Yes, if they keep to their chorus. But here
The general with his chiefs and men of trust. [comes
A goodly rebel!

Enter the Constable BOURBON * "*cum suis*," etc. etc.

Phil. How now, noble prince,
You are not cheerful?

Bourb. Why should I be so?

Phil. Upon the eve of conquest, such as ours,
Most men would be so.

Bourb. If I were secure!

Phil. Doubt not our soldiers. Were the walls of
adamant,
They'd crack them. Hunger is a sharp artillery.

Bourb. That they will falter is my least of fears.
That they will be repulsed, with Bourbon for
Their chief, and all their kindled appetites
To marshal them on — were those hoary walls

* [Charles of Bourbon was cousin to Francis I., and Constable of France. Being bitterly persecuted by the queen-mother for having declined the honor of her hand, and also by the king, he transferred his services to the Emperor Charles V.]

Mountains, and those who guard them like the gods
Of the old fables, I would trust my Titans ; —

But now —

Phil. They are but men who war with mortals.

Bourb. True : but those walls have girded in
great ages,

And sent forth mighty spirits. The past earth
And present phantom of imperious Rome
Is peopled with those warriors ; and methinks
They flit along the eternal city's rampart,
And stretch their glorious, gory, shadowy hands,
And beckon me away !

Phil. So let them ! Wilt thou
Turn back from shadowy menaces of shadows ?

Bourb. They do not menace me. I could have
faced,
Methinks, a Sylla's menace ; but they clasp,
And raise, and wring their dim and deathlike
hands,

And with their thin aspen faces and fixed eyes
Fascinate mine. Look there !

Phil. I look upon
A lofty battlement.

Bourb. And there !

Phil. Not even
A guard in sight ; they wisely keep below,
Sheltered by the gray parapet from some
Stray bullet of our lansquenets, who might
Practise in the cool twilight.

Bourb. You are blind.

Phil. If seeing nothing more than may be seen
Be so.

Bourb. A thousand years have manned the walls
With all their heroës, — the last Cato stands
And tears his bowels, rather than survive
The liberty of that I would enslave.
And the first Cæsar with his triumphs flits
From battlement to battlement.

Phil. Then conquer
The walls for which he conquered, and be greater!

Bourb. True: so I will, or perish.

Phil. You can *not*.
In such an enterprise to die is rather
The dawn of an eternal day, than death.

[*Count ARNOLD and CÆSAR advance.*]

Cæs. And the mere men — do they too sweat
beneath
The noon of this same ever-scorching glory?

Bourb. Ah!
Welcome the bitter hunchback! and his master,
The beauty of our host, and brave as beauteous,
And generous as lovely. We shall find
Work for you both ere morning.

Cæs. You will find,
So please your highness, no less for yourself.

Bourb. And if I do, there will not be a laborer
More forward, hunchback!

Cæs. You may well say so,
For *you* have seen that back — as general,
Placed in the rear in action — but your foes
Have never seen it.

Bourb. That's a fair retort,
For I provoked it:—but the Bourbon's breast
Has been, and ever shall be, far advanced
In danger's face as yours, were you the *devil*.

Cæs. And if I were, I might have saved myself
The toil of coming here.

Phil. Why so?

Cæs. One half
Of your brave bands of their own bold accord
Will go to him, the other half be sent,
More swiftly, not less surely.

Bourb. Arnold, your
Slight crooked friend's as snake-like in his words
As his deeds.

Cæs. Your highness much mistakes me.
The first snake was a flatterer—I am none;
And for my deeds, I only sting when stung.

Bourb. You are brave, and that's enough for
me; and quick
In speech as sharp in action—and that's more.
I am not alone a soldier, but the soldiers'
Comrade.

Cæs. They are but bad company, your highness:
And worse even for their friends than foes, as being
More permanent acquaintance.

Phil. How now, fellow!
Thou waxest insolent, beyond the privilege
Of a buffoon.

Cæs. You mean I speak the truth.
I'll lie—it is as easy: then you'll praise me
For calling you a hero.

Bourb.

Philibert!

Let him alone; he's brave, and ever has [shoulder
Been first, with that swart face and mountain
In field or storm, and patient in starvation;
And for his tongue, the camp is full of license,
And the sharp stinging of a lively rogue
Is, to my mind, far preferable to
The gross, dull, heavy, gloomy execration
Of a mere famished, sullen, grumbling slave,
Whom nothing can convince save a full meal,
And wine, and sleep, and a few maravedis,
With which he deems him rich.

Cæs.

It would be well

If the earth's princes asked no more.

Bourb.

Be silent!

Cæs. Ay, but not idle. Work yourself with words!
You have few to speak.

Phil.

What means the audacious prater?

Cæs. To prate, like other prophets.

Bourb.

Philibert!

Why will you vex him? Have we not enough
To think on? Arnold! I will lead the attack
To-morrow.

Arn.

I have heard as much, my lord.

Bourb. And you will follow?

Arn.

Since I must not lead.

Bourb. 'Tis necessary for the further daring
Of our too needy army, that their chief
Plant the first foot upon the foremost ladder's
First step.

Cæs. Upon its topmost, let us hope :
So shall he have his full deserts.

Bourb. The world's
Great capital perchance is ours to-morrow.
Through every change the seven-hilled city hath
Retained her sway o'er nations, and the Cæsars,
But yielded to the Alarics, the Alarics
Unto the pontiffs. Roman, Goth, or priest,
Still the world's masters. Civilized, barbarian,
Or saintly, still the walls of Romulus
Have been the circus of an empire. Well !
'T was *their* turn — now 't is ours ; and let us hope
That we will fight as well, and rule much better.

Cæs. No doubt, the camp's the school of civic
rights.

What would you make of Rome ?

Bourb. That which it was.

Cæs. In Alaric's time ?

Bourb. No, slave ! in the first Cæsar's,
Whose name you bear like other curs —

Cæs. And kings !

'T is a great name for blood-hounds.

Bourb. There's a demon
In that fierce rattlesnake thy tongue. Wilt never
Be serious ?

Cæs. On the eve of battle, no ; —
That were not soldier-like. 'T is for the general
To be more pensive : we adventurers
Must be more cheerful. Wherefore should we think ?
Our tutelar deity, in a leader's shape,

Takes care of us. Keep thought aloof from hosts!
If the knaves take to thinking, you will have
To crack those walls alone.

Bourb. You may sneer, since
'T is lucky for you that you fight no worse for 't.

Cæs. I thank you for the freedom; 't is the only
Pay I have taken in your highness' service.

Bourb. Well, sir, to-morrow you shall pay your-
self.

Look on those towers; they hold my treasury:
But Philibert, we'll in to council. Arnold,
We would request your presence.

Arn. Prince! my service
Is yours, as in the field.

Bourb. In both we prize it,
And yours will be a post of trust at daybreak.

Cæs. And mine?

Bourb. To follow glory with the Bourbon.
Good night!

Arn. (to CÆSAR). Prepare our armor for the
assault,
And wait within my tent.

[*Exeunt* BOURBON, ARNOLD, PHILIBERT, *etc.*

Cæs. (*solus*). Within thy tent!
Think'st thou that I pass from thee with my pres-
ence?

Or that this crooked coffer, which contained
Thy principle of life, is aught to me
Except a mask? And these are men, forsooth!
Heroes and chiefs, the flower of Adam's bastards!

This is the consequence of giving matter
 The power of thought. It is a stubborn substance,
 And thinks chaotically, as it acts,
 Ever relapsing into its first elements.
 Well! I must play with these poor puppets: 't is
 The spirit's pastime in his idler hours.
 When I grow weary of it, I have business
 Amongst the stars, which these poor creatures deem
 Were made for them to look at. 'T were a jest now
 To bring one down amongst them, and set fire
 Unto their anthill: how the pismires then
 Would scamper o'er the scalding soil, and, ceasing
 From tearing down each other's nests, pipe forth
 One universal orison! Ha! ha! [*Exit CÆSAR.*

PART II.

SCENE I.

*Before the walls of Rome.—The assault: the army
 in motion, with ladders to scale the walls; BOUR-
 BON, with a white scarf over his armor, foremost.*

Chorus of Spirits in the air.

1.

'T is the morn, but dim and dark.
 Whither flies the silent lark?
 Whither shrinks the clouded sun?
 Is the day indeed begun?

Nature's eye is melancholy
O'er the city high and holy :
But without there is a din
Should arouse the saints within,
And revive the heroic ashes
Round which yellow Tiber dashes.
Oh ye seven hills ! awaken,
Ere your very base be shaken !

2.

Hearken to the steady stamp !
Mars is in their every tramp !
Not a step is out of tune,
As the tides obey the moon !
On they march, though to self-slaughter,
Regular as rolling water,
Whose high waves o'ersweep the border
Of huge moles, but keep their order,
Breaking only rank by rank.
Hearken to the armor's clank !
Look down o'er each frowning warrior,
How he glares upon the barrier :
Look on each step of each ladder,
As the stripes that streak an adder.

3.

Look upon the bristling wall,
Manned without an interval !
Round and round, and tier on tier,
Cannon's black mouth, shining spear,

Lit match, bell-mouthed musquetoön,
Gaping to be murderous soon;
All the warlike gear of old,
Mixed with what we now behold,
In this strife 'twixt old and new,
Gather like a locusts' crew.
Shade of Remus! 't is a time
Awful as thy brother's crime!
Christians war against Christ's shrine: —
Must its lot be like to thine?

4.

Near — and near — and nearer still,
As the earthquake saps the hill,
First with trembling, hollow motion,
Like a scarce-awakened ocean,
Then with stronger shock and louder,
Till the rocks are crushed to powder, —
Onward sweeps the rolling host!
Heroes of the immortal boast!
Mighty chiefs! eternal shadows!
First flowers of the bloody meadows
Which encompass Rome, the mother
Of a people without brother!
Will you sleep when nations' quarrels
Plough the root up of your laurels?
Ye who weep o'er Carthage burning,
Weep not — *strike!* for Rome is mourning! *

* Scipio, the second Africanus, is said to have repeated a verse of Homer, and wept over the burning of Carthage. He had better have granted it a capitulation.

5.

Onward sweep the varied nations!
Famine long hath dealt their rations.
To the wall, with hate and hunger,
Numerous as wolves, and stronger,
On they sweep. Oh! glorious city,
Must thou be a theme for pity?
Fight, like your first sire, each Roman!
Alaric was a gentle foeman,
Matched with Bourbon's black banditti!
Rouse thee, thou eternal city;
Rouse thee! Rather give the torch
With thine own hand to thy porch,
Than behold such hosts pollute
Your worst dwelling with their foot.

6.

Ah! behold yon bleeding spectre!
Ilion's children find no Hector;
Priam's offspring loved their brother;
Rome's great sire forgot his mother,
When he slew his gallant twin,
With inexpressible sin.
See the giant shadow stride
O'er the ramparts high and wide!
When the first o'erleapt thy wall,
Its foundation mourned thy fall.
Now, though towering like a Babel,
Who to stop his steps are able?

Stalking o'er thy highest dome,
Remus claims his vengeance, Rome!

7.

Now they reach thee in their anger:
Fire and smoke and hellish clangor
Are around thee, thou world's wonder!
Death is in thy walls and under.
Now the meeting steel first clashes,
Downward then the ladder crashes,
With its iron load all gleaming,
Lying at its foot blaspheming!
Up again! for every warrior
Slain, another climbs the barrier.
Thicker grows the strife: thy ditches
Europe's mingling gore enriches.
Rome! although thy wall may perish,
Such manure thy fields will cherish,
Making gay the harvest home;
But thy hearths, alas! oh, Rome!—
Yet be Rome amidst thine anguish,
Fight as thou wast wont to vanquish!

8.

Yet once more, ye old Penates!
Let not your quenched hearths be Até's!
Yet again ye shadowy heroes,
Yield not to these stranger Neros!
Though the son who slew his mother
Shed Rome's blood, he was your brother:

'Twas the Roman curbed the Roman ; —
Brennus was a baffled foeman.
Yet again, ye saints and martyrs,
Rise ! for yours are holier charters !
Mighty gods of temples falling,
Yet in ruin still appalling !
Mightier founders of those altars,
True and Christian, — strike the assaulters !
Tiber ! Tiber ! let thy torrent
Show even nature's self abhorrent.
Let each breathing heart dilated
Turn, as doth the lion baited !
Rome be crushed to one wide tomb,
But be still the Roman's Rome !

BOURBON, ARNOLD, CÆSAR, *and others, arrive at the foot of the wall. ARNOLD is about to plant his ladder.*

Bourb. Hold, Arnold ! I am first.

Arn.

Not so, my lord.

Bourb. Hold, sir, I charge you ! Follow ! I am proud

Of such a follower, but will brook no leader.

[BOURBON *plants his ladder, and begins to mount.*

Now, boys ! On ! on !

[*A shot strikes him, and BOURBON falls.*

Cæs.

And off !

Arn.

Eternal powers !

The host will be appalled, — but vengeance ! vengeance !

Bourb. 'Tis nothing — lend me your hand.

[BOURBON *takes* ARNOLD *by the hand, and rises ;*
but as he puts his foot on the step, falls again.

Arnold ! I am sped.

Conceal my fall — all will go well — conceal it !

Fling my cloak o'er what will be dust anon ;

Let not the soldiers see it.

Arn.

You must be

Removed ; the aid of ——

Bourb.

No, my gallant boy ;

Death is upon me. But what is *one* life ?

The Bourbon's spirit shall command them still.

Keep them yet ignorant that I am but clay,

Till they are conquerors — then do as you may.

Cæs. Would not your highness choose to kiss the
 cross ?

We have no priest here, but the hilt of sword

May serve instead : — it did the same for Bayard.*

Bourb. Thou bitter slave ! to name *him* at this
 time !

But I deserve it.

* [Finding himself mortally wounded, Bayard ordered one of his attendants to place him under a tree with his face towards the enemy ; then fixing his eyes on the guard of his sword, which he held up instead of a cross, he addressed his prayers to God, and in this posture he calmly waited the approach of death. — ROBERTSON'S *Charles V.*

Just before Bayard's death Bourbon passing by with the victorious Imperialists, expressed his compassion. "Pity not me," said Bayard, "for I die like an honest man ; but I pity you who are serving against your king, your country, and your oath." Hence the dying Bourbon exclaims against Cæsar for bringing to his mind the rebuke of the dying Bayard.]

Arn. (to CÆSAR). Villain, hold your peace !

Cæs. What, when a Christian dies ? Shall I not
offer

A Christian “ Vade in pace ? ”

Arn. Silence ! Oh !

Those eyes are glazing which o’erlooked the world.
And saw no equal.

Bourb. Arnold, should’st thou see
France —— But hark ! hark ! the assault grows
warmer — Oh !

For but an hour, a minute more of life
To die within the wall ! Hence, Arnold, hence !
You lose time — they will conquer Rome without
thee.

Arn. And without *thee* !

Bourb. Not so ; I’ll lead them still
In spirit. Cover up my dust, and breathe not
That I have ceased to breathe. Away ! and be
Victorious !

Arn. But I must not leave thee thus.

Bourb. You must — farewell — Up ! up ! the
world is winning. [BOURBON *dies*.*

* [On the 1st of May, 1527, the Constable and his army came in sight of Rome, and the next morning commenced the attack. Bourbon wore a white vest over his armor, in order, he said, to be more conspicuous both to his friends and foes. He led on to the walls, and commenced a furious assault, which was repelled with equal violence. Seeing that his army began to waver, he seized a scaling-ladder from a soldier standing, and was in the act of ascending, when he was pierced by a musket-ball, and fell. Feeling that his wound was mortal, he desired that his

Cæs. (to ARNOLD). Come, count, to business.

Arn. True. I'll weep hereafter.

[ARNOLD covers BOURBON'S body with a mantle,
and mounts the ladder, crying

The Bourbon! Bourbon! On, boys! Rome is ours!

Cæs. Good night, lord constable! thou wert a
man.

[CÆSAR follows ARNOLD; they reach the battlement; ARNOLD and CÆSAR are struck down.

Cæs. A precious somerset! Is your countship injured?

Arn. No. [Remounts the ladder.

Cæs. A rare blood-hound, when his own is heated!
And 'tis no boy's play. Now he strikes them
down!

His hand is on the battlement — he grasps it
As though it were an altar; now his foot
Is on it, and ——— What have we here? — a Roman?
[A man falls.

The first bird of the covey! he has fallen
On the outside of the nest. Why, how now, fellow?

Wounded Man. A drop of water!

Cæs. Blood's the only liquid
Nearer than Tiber.

Wounded Man. I have died for Rome. [Dies.

Cæs. And so did Bourbon, in another sense.

body might be concealed from his soldiers, and instantly expired. — ROBERTSON.]

Oh these immortal men ! and their great motives !
But I must after my young charge. He is
By this time i' the forum. Charge ! charge !

[CÆSAR mounts the ladder ; the scene closes.]

SCENE II.

The City. — Combats between the Besiegers and Besieged in the streets. Inhabitants flying in confusion.

Enter CÆSAR.

Cæs. I cannot find my hero ; he is mixed
With the heroic crowd that now pursue
The fugitives, or battle with the desperate.
What have we here ? A cardinal or two
That do not seem in love with martyrdom.
How the old red-shanks scamper ! Could they doff
Their hose as they have doffed their hats, 't would be
A blessing, as a mark the less for plunder.
But let them fly ; the crimson kennels now
Will not much stain their stockings, since the mire
Is of the self-same purple hue.

Enter a Party fighting — ARNOLD at the head of the Besiegers.

He comes,
Hand in hand with the mild twins — Gore and Glory.
Holla ! hold, count !

Arn.

Away ! they must not rally.

Cæs. I tell thee, be not rash ; a golden bridge
Is for a flying enemy. I gave thee
A form of beauty, and an
Exemption from some maladies of body,
But not of mind, which is not mine to give.
But though I gave the form of 'Thetis' son,
I dipt thee not in Styx ; and 'gainst a foe
I would not warrant thy chivalric heart
More than Pelides' heel ; why then, be cautious,
And know thyself a mortal still.

Arn. And who
With aught of soul would combat if he were
Invulnerable ? That were pretty sport.
Think'st thou I beat for hares when lions roar ?

[ARNOLD *rushes into the combat.*

Cæs. A precious sample of humanity !
Well, his blood's up ; and if a little's shed,
'Twill serve to curb his fever.

[ARNOLD *engages with a Roman, who retires
towards a portico.*

Arn. Yield thee, slave !
I promise quarter.

Rom. That's soon said.

Arn. And done —
My word is known.

Rom. So shall be my deeds.

[*They reëngage. CÆSAR comes forward.*

Cæs. Why, Arnold ! hold thine own : thou hast
in hand

A famous artisan, a cunning sculptor ;

Also a dealer in the sword and dagger.
Not so, my musqueteer; 't was he who slew
The Bourbon from the wall.

Arn. Ay, did he so?

Then he hath carved his monument.

Rom. I yet

May live to carve your betters.

Cæs. Well said, my man of marble! Benvenuto,
Thou hast some practice in both ways; and he
Who slays Cellini will have worked as hard
As e'er thou didst upon Carrara's blocks.*

[ARNOLD *disarms and wounds* CELLINI, *but slightly: the latter draws a pistol, and fires; then retires, and disappears through the portico.*

Cæs. How farest thou? Thou hast a taste, methinks,
Of red Bellona's banquet.

Arn. (*staggers*). 'T is a scratch.

Lend me thy scarf. He shall not 'scape me thus.

Cæs. Where is it?

Arn. In the shoulder, not the sword arm —

* ["Levelling my arquebuse," says Benvenuto Cellini, "I discharged it with a deliberate aim at a person who seemed to be lifted above the rest. I cautiously approached the walls, and perceived that there was an extraordinary confusion among the assailants, occasioned by our having shot the duke of Bourbon: he was, as I understood afterwards, that chief personage whom I saw raised above the rest." — Vol. i. p. 120. This, however, is one of the many stories in Cellini's amusing autobiography which nobody credits.]

And that's enough. I am thirsty : would I had
A helm of water !

Cæs. That's a liquid now
In requisition, but by no means easiest
To come at.

Arn. And my thirst increases ; — but
I'll find a way to quench it.

Cæs. Or be quenched
Thyself ?

Arn. The chance is even ; we will throw
The dice thereon. But I lose time in prating ;
Prithee be quick. [*CÆSAR binds on the scarf.*
And what dost thou so idly ?

Why dost not strike ?

Cæs. Your old philosophers
Beheld mankind, as mere spectators of
The Olympic games. When I behold a prize
Worth wrestling for, I may be found a Milo.

Arn. Ay, 'gainst an oak.

Cæs. A forest, when it suits me :
I combat with a mass, or not at all.
Meantime, pursue thy sport as I do mine ;
Which is just now to gaze, since all these laborers
Will reap my harvest gratis.

Arn. Thou art still
A fiend !

Cæs. And thou — a man.

Arn. Why, such I fain would show me.

Cæs. True — as men are.

Arn. And what is that ?

Cæs. Thou feelest and thou see'st.
[*Exit ARNOLD, joining in the combat which still continues between detached parties. The scene closes.*

SCENE III.

St. Peter's — The Interior of the Church — The Pope at the Altar — Priests, etc. crowding in confusion, and Citizens flying for refuge, pursued by Soldiery.

Enter CÆSAR.

A Spanish Soldier. Down with them, comrades!
seize upon those lamps!

Cleave yon bald-pated shaveling to the chine!
His rosary's of gold!

Lutheran Soldier. Revenge! revenge!
Plunder hereafter, but for vengeance now —
Yonder stands Anti-Christ!

Cæs. (interposing). How now, schismatic?
What would'st thou?

Luth. Sold. In the holy name of Christ,
Destroy proud Anti-Christ. I am a Christian.

Cæs. Yea, a disciple that would make the founder
Of your belief renounce it, could he see
Such proselytes. Best stint thyself to plunder.

Luth. Sold. I say he is the devil.

Cæs. Hush! keep that secret,
Lest he should recognize you for his own.

Luth. Sold. Why would you save him? I repeat
he is
The devil, or the devil's vicar upon earth.

Cæs. And that's the reason: would you make a
quarrel
With your best friends? You had far best be quiet;
His hour is not yet come.

Luth. Sold. That shall be seen!

[*The Lutheran Soldier rushes forward; a shot strikes him from one of the Pope's Guards, and he falls at the foot of the Altar.*]

Cæs. (*to the Lutheran*). I told you so.

Luth. Sold. And will you not avenge me?

Cæs. Not I! You know that "Vengeance is the
Lord's:"

You see he loves no interlopers.

Luth. Sold. (*dying*). Oh!

Had I but slain him, I had gone on high,
Crowned with eternal glory! Heaven, forgive
My feebleness of arm that reached him not,
And take thy servant to thy mercy. 'Tis
A glorious triumph still; proud Babylon's
No more; the Harlot of the Seven Hills
Hath changed her scarlet raiment for sackcloth
And ashes! [*The Lutheran dies.*]

Cæs. Yes, thine own amidst the rest.
Well done, old Babel!

[*The Guards defend themselves desperately, while the Pontiff escapes, by a private passage, to the Vatican and the Castle of St. Angelo.*]

Cæs. Ha! right nobly battled!
Now, priest! now, soldier! the two great professions,

Together by the ears and hearts! I have not
Seen a more comic pantomime since Titus
Took Jewry. But the Romans had the best then;
Now they must take their turn.

Soldiers. He hath escaped!
Follow!

Another Sold. They have barred the narrow
passage up,
And it is clogged with dead even to the door.

Cæs. I am glad he hath escaped: he may thank
me for't
In part. I would not have his bulls abolished —
'T were worth one half our empire: his indulgences
Demand some in return; — no, no, he must not
Fall; — and besides, his now escape may furnish
A future miracle, in future proof
Of his infallibility. [*To the Spanish Soldiery.*

Well, cut-throats!
What do you pause for? If you make not haste,
There will not be a link of pious gold left.
And *you*, too, catholics! Would ye return
From such a pilgrimage without a relic?
The very Lutherans have more true devotion:
See how they strip t' e shrines!

Soldiers. By holy Peter!
He speaks the truth; the heretics will bear
The best away.

Cæs. And that were shame! Go to!
Assist in their conversion.

[*The Soldiers disperse; many quit the Church,
others enter.*

Cæs. They are gone,
And others come: so flows the wave on wave
Of what these creatures call eternity,
Deeming themselves the breakers of the ocean,
While they are but its bubbles, ignorant
That foam is their foundation. So, another!

*Enter OLIMPIA, flying from the pursuit—She springs
upon the Altar.*

Sold. She's mine!

Another Sold. (*opposing the former*). You lie, I
tracked her first; and were she
The Pope's niece, I'll not yield her. [*They fight.*

3d Sold. (*advancing towards OLIMPIA*). You may
settle

Your claims; I'll make mine good.

Olimp. Infernal slave!
You touch me not alive.

3d Sold. Alive or dead!

Olimp. (*embracing a massive crucifix*). Respect
your God!

3d Sold. Yes, when he shines in gold.
Girl, you but grasp your dowry.

[*As he advances, OLIMPIA, with a strong and
sudden effort, casts down the crucifix: it
strikes the Soldier, who falls.*

3d Sold. Oh, great God!

Olimp. Ah! now you recognize him.

3d Sold. My brain's crushed!
Comrades, help, ho! All's darkness! [*He dies.*]

Other Soldiers (coming up). Slay her, although
she had a thousand lives:

She hath killed our comrade.

Olimp. Welcome such a death!
You have no life to give, which the worst slave
Would take. Great God! through thy redeeming
Son,

And thy Son's Mother, now receive me as
I would approach thee, worthy her, and him, and
thee!

Enter ARNOLD.

Arn. What do I see? Accursed jackals!
Forbear!

Cæs. (aside and laughing). Ha! ha! here's
equity! The dogs
Have as much right as he. But to the issue!

Soldiers. Count, she hath slain our comrade.

Arn. With what weapon?

Sold. The cross, beneath which he is crushed;
behold him

Lie there, more like a worm than man; she cast it
Upon his head.

Arn. Even so; there is a woman
Worthy a brave man's liking. Were ye such,
Ye would have honored her. But get ye hence,

And thank your meanness, other God you have none
 For your existence. Had you touched a hair
 Of those dishevelled locks, I would have thinned
 Your ranks more than the enemy. Away!
 Ye jackals! gnaw the bones the lion leaves,
 But not even these till he permits.

A Sold. (murmuring). The lion
 Might conquer for himself then.

Arn. (cuts him down). Mutineer!
 Rebel in hell — you shall obey on earth!

[*The Soldiers assault ARNOLD.*

Arn. Come on! I'm glad on't! I will show you,
 slaves,
 How you should be commanded, and who led you
 First o'er the wall you were so shy to scale,
 Until I waved my banners from its height,
 As you are bold within it.

[*ARNOLD mows down the foremost; the rest
 throw down their arms.*

Soldiers. Mercy! mercy!

Arn. Then learn to grant it. Have I taught you
 who

Led you o'er Rome's eternal battlements?

Soldiers: We saw it, and we know it; yet for-
 give

A moment's error in the heat of conquest —
 The conquest which you led to.

Arn. Get you hence!
 Hence to your quarters! you will find them fixed
 In the Colonna palace.

Olimp. (aside). In my father's
House! [no further need

Arn. (to the Soldiers). Leave your arms; ye have
Of such: the city's rendered. And mark well
You keep your hands clean, or I'll find out a stream
As red as Tiber now runs, for your baptism.

Soldiers (deposing their arms and departing.) We
obey!

Arn. (to OLIMPIA). Lady, you are safe.

Olimp. I should be so,
Had I a knife even; but it matters not —
Death hath a thousand gates; and on the marble,
Even at the altar foot, whence I look down
Upon destruction, shall my head be dashed,
Ere thou ascend it. God forgive thee, man!

Arn. I wish to merit his forgiveness, and
Thine own, although I have not injured thee.

Olimp. No! Thou hast only sacked my native
land, —

No injury! — and made my father's house
A den of thieves! No injury! — this temple —
Slippery with Roman and with holy gore.
No injury! And now thou would preserve me,
To be — but that shall never be!

[*She raises her eyes to Heaven, folds her robe
round her, and prepares to dash herself down
on the side of the Altar opposite to that where
ARNOLD stands.*

Arn.
I swear.

Hold! hold!

Olimp. Spare thine already forfeit soul
A perjury for which even hell would loathe thee.
I know thee.

Arn. No, thou know'st me not; I am not
Of these men, though ——

Olimp. I judge thee by thy mates;
It is for God to judge thee as thou art.
I see thee purple with the blood of Rome;
Take mine, 'tis all thou e'er shalt have of me,
And here, upon the marble of this temple,
Where the baptismal font baptized me God's,
I offer him a blood less holy
But not less pure (pure as it left me then,
A redeemed infant) than the holy water
The saints have sanctified!

[*OLIMPIA waves her hand to ARNOLD with disdain, and dashes herself on the pavement from the Altar.*]

Arn. Eternal God!
I feel thee now! Help! help! She's gone.

Cæs. (approaches). I am here.

Arn. Thou! but oh, save her!

Cæs. (assisting him to raise OLIMPIA). She hath
done it well!

The leap was serious.

Arn. Oh! she is lifeless!

Cæs. If
She be so, I have nought to do with that:
The resurrection is beyond me.

Arn. Slave!

Cæs. Ay, slave or master, 'tis all one: methinks
Good words, however, are as well at times.

Arn. Words! — Canst thou aid her?

Cæs. I will try. A sprinkling
Of that same holy water may be useful.

[*He brings some in his helmet from the font.*]

Arn. 'Tis mixed with blood.

Cæs. There is no cleaner now
In Rome.

Arn. How pale! how beautiful! how lifeless!
Alive or dead, thou essence of all beauty,
I love but thee!

Cæs. Even so Achilles loved
Penthesilea: with his form it seems
You have his heart, and yet it was no soft one.

Arn. She breathes! But no, 't was nothing or the
last
Faint flutter life disputes with death.

Cæs. She breathes.

Arn. *Thou* say'st it? Then 'tis truth.

Cæs. You do me right —
The devil speaks truth much oftener than he's
deemed:

He hath an ignorant audience.

Arn. (*without attending to him*). Yes! her heart
beats.

Alas! that the first beat of the only heart
I ever wished to beat with mine should vibrate
To an assassin's pulse.

Cæs. A sage reflection,

But somewhat late i' the day. Where shall we bear
her?

I say she lives.

Arn. And will she live?

Cæs. As much

As dust can.

Arn. Then she is dead!

Cæs. Bah! bah! You are so,

And do not know it. She will come to life —

Such as you think so, such as you now are;

But we must work by human means.

Arn. We will

Convey her unto the Colonna palace,

Where I have pitched my banner.

Cæs. Come then! raise her up!

Arn. Softly!

Cæs. As softly as they bear the dead.

Perhaps because they cannot feel the jolting.

Arn. But doth she live indeed?

Cæs. Nay, never fear!

But, if you rue it after, blame not me.

Arn. Let her but live!

Cæs. The spirit of her life

Is yet within her breast, and may revive.

Count! count! I am your servant in all things,

And this is a new office: — 't is not oft

I am employed in such; but you perceive

How stanch a friend is what you call a fiend.

On earth you have often only fiends for friends;

Now *I* desert not mine. Soft! bear her hence,

The beautiful half-clay, and nearly spirit !
I am almost enamoured of her, as
Of old the angels of her earliest sex.

Arn. Thou !

Cæs. I ! But fear not. I'll not be your rival.

Arn. Rival !

Cæs. I could be one right formidable ;
But since I slew the seven husbands of
Tobias' future bride (and after all
Was smoked out by some incense), I have laid
Aside intrigue : 't is rarely worth the trouble
Of gaining, or — what is more difficult —
Getting rid of your prize again ; for there's
The rub ! at least to mortals.

Arn. Prithee, peace !
Softly ! methinks her lips move, her eyes open !

Cæs. Like stars, no doubt ; for that 's a metaphor
For Lucifer and Venus.

Arn. To the palace
Colonna, as I told you !

Cæs. Oh ! I know
My way through Rome.

Arn. Now onward, onward ! Gently !

[*Exeunt, bearing OLIMPIA. The scene closes.*]

PART III.

SCENE I.

A Castle in the Apennines, surrounded by a wild but smiling country. Chorus of Peasants singing before the Gates.

CHORUS.

1.

The wars are over,
The spring is come ;
The bride and her lover
Have sought their home :
They are happy, we rejoice ;
Let their hearts have an echo in every voice !

2.

The spring is come ; the violet's gone,
The first-born child of the early sun :
With us she is but a winter's flower,
The snow on the hills cannot blast her bower,
And she lifts up her dewy eye of blue
To the youngest sky of the self-same hue.

3.

And when the spring comes with her host
Of flowers, that flower beloved the most
Shrinks from the crowd that may confuse
Her heavenly odor and virgin hues.

4.

Pluck the others, but still remember
Their herald out of dim December —
The morning star of all the flowers,
The pledge of daylight's lengthened hours ;
Nor, midst the roses, e'er forget
The virgin, virgin violet.

Enter CÆSAR.

Cæs. (singing). The wars are all over,
Our swords are all idle,
The steed bites the bridle,
The casque's on the wall.
There's rest for the rover ;
But his armor is rusty,
And the veteran grows crusty,
As he yawns in the hall.
He drinks — but what's drinking ?
A mere pause from thinking !
No bugle awakes him with life-and-death call

CHORUS.

But the hound bayeth loudly,
The boar's in the wood,
And the falcon longs proudly
To spring from her hood :
On the wrist of the noble
She sits like a crest,
And the air is in trouble
With birds from their nest.

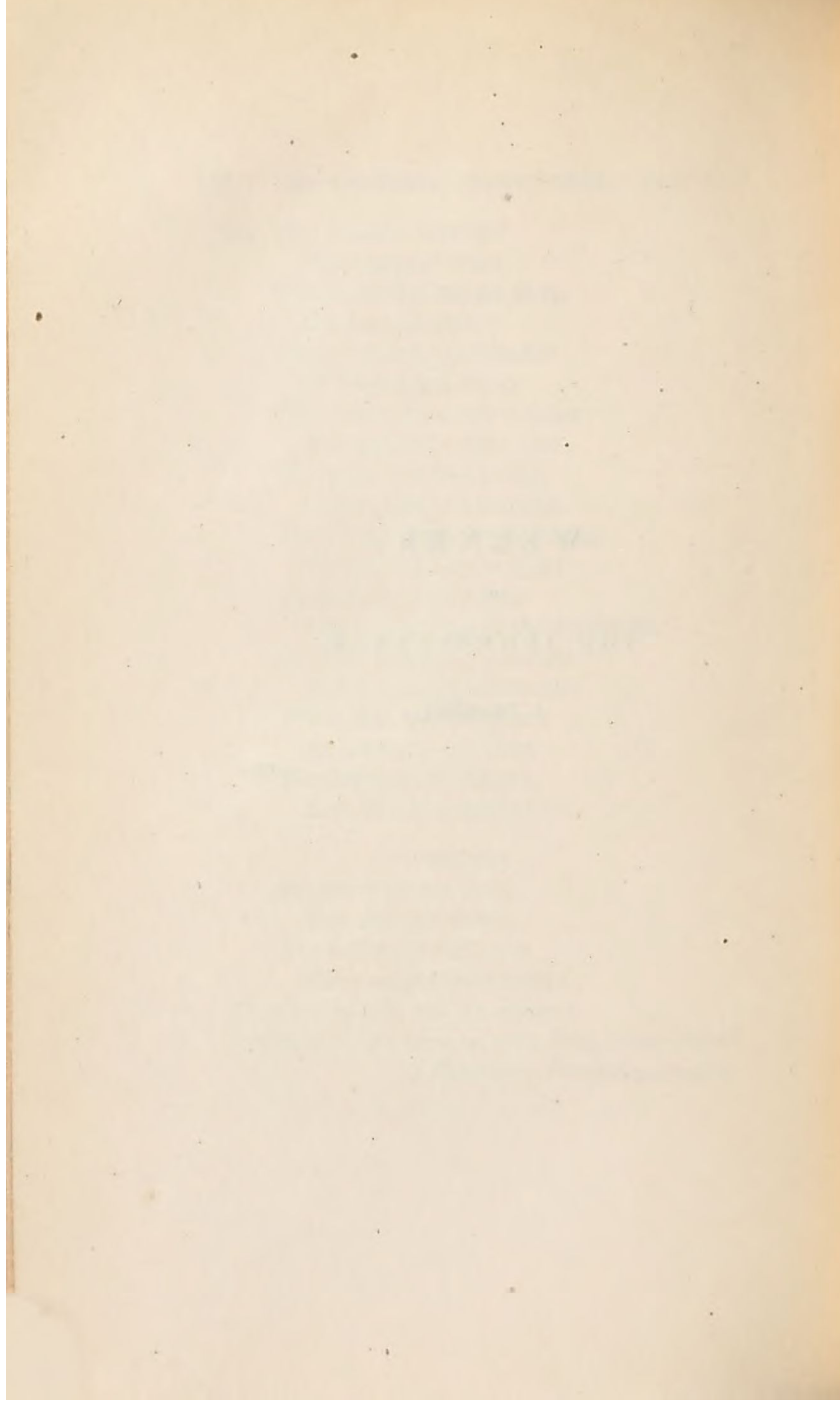
Cæs. Oh! shadow of glory!
 Dim image of war!
 But the chase hath no story,
 Her hero no star,
 Since Nimrod, the founder
 Of empire and chase,
 Who made the woods wonder
 And quake for their race;
 When the lion was young,
 In the pride of his might,
 Then 'twas sport for the strong
 To embrace him in fight;
 To go forth, with a pine
 For a spear, 'gainst the mammoth,
 Or strike through the ravine
 At the foaming behemoth;
 While man was in stature
 As towers in our time,
 The first-born of Nature,
 And, like her, sublime!

CHORUS.

But the wars are over,
 The spring is come;
 The bride and her lover
 Have sought their home:
 They are happy, and we rejoice;
 Let their hearts have an echo from every voice!
[Exeunt the Peasantry, singing.]

WERNER ;
OR,
THE INHERITANCE.
A TRAGEDY.

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PREFACE.

THE following drama is taken entirely from the "*German's Tale, Kruitznor*," published many years ago in *Lee's Canterbury Tales*; written (I believe) by two sisters, of whom one furnished only this story and another, both of which are considered superior to the remainder of the collection.* I have adopted the characters, plan, and even the language, of many parts of this story. Some of the characters are modified or altered, a few of the names changed, and one character (Ida of Strahlenheim) added by myself: but in the rest the original is chiefly followed. When I was young (about fourteen, I think,) I first read this tale, which made a deep impression upon me; and may, indeed, be said to contain the germ of much that I have since written. I am not sure that it ever was very popular; or, at

* [This is not correct. "The Young Lady's Tale, or the Two Emily's," and "the Clergyman's Tale, or Pembroke," were contributed by Sophia Lee. The "*German's Tale*," and all the others in the *Canterbury Collection*, were written by Harriet, the younger of the sisters.]

any rate, its popularity has since been eclipsed by that of other great writers in the same department. But I have generally found that those who *had* read it, agreed with me in their estimate of the singular power of mind and conception which it develops. I should also add *conception*, rather than execution; for the story might, perhaps, have been developed with greater advantage. Amongst those whose opinions agreed with mine upon this story, I could mention some very high names: but it is not necessary, nor indeed of any use; for every one must judge according to his own feelings. I merely refer the reader to the original story, that he may see to what extent I have borrowed from it; and am not unwilling that he should find much greater pleasure in perusing it than the drama which is founded upon its contents.

I had begun a drama upon this tale so far back as 1815, (the first I ever attempted, except one at thirteen years old, called "*Ulric and Ilvina*," which I had sense enough to burn,) and had nearly completed an act, when I was interrupted by circumstances. This is somewhere amongst my papers in England; but as it has not been found, I have rewritten the first, and added the subsequent acts.

The whole is neither intended, nor in any shape adapted, for the stage.*

Pisa, February, 1822.

* [Werner, however, has been produced on the stage with tolerable success since Byron's death.]

INTRODUCTION

TO WERNER.

THE tragedy of "Werner" was begun at Pisa, December the 18th, 1821, completed January the 20th, 1822, and published in London in the November after. The contemporary reviews of "Werner" were, without exception, unfavorable. The critique in Blackwood begins thus:—

"Who could be so absurd as to think, that a dramatist has no right to make free with other people's fables? On the contrary, we are quite aware that that particular species of genius which is exhibited in the construction of plots, never at any period flourished in England. We all know that Shakspeare himself took his stories from Italian novels, Danish sagas, English chronicles, Plutarch's Lives — from anywhere rather than from his own invention. But did he take *the whole* of Hamlet, or Juliet, or Richard the Third, or Antony and Cleopatra, from any of these foreign

sources? Did he not *invent*, in the noblest sense of the word, all the *characters* of his pieces? Who dreams that any old Italian novelist, or ballad-maker, could have formed the imagination of such a creature as Juliet? Who dreams that the HAMLET of Shakspeare, the princely enthusiast, the melancholy philosopher, that spirit refined even to pain, that most incomprehensible and unapproachable of all the creations of human genius, is the same being, in any thing but the name, with the rough, strong-hearted, bloody-handed AMLETT of the north? Who is there that supposes Goethe to have taken the character of *his* Faust from the nursery rhymes and penny pamphlets about the Devil and Doctor Faustus? Or who, to come nearer home, imagines that Lord Byron himself found *his* Sardanapalus in Dionysius of Halicarnassus?

“But *here* Lord Byron has *invented* nothing—absolutely NOTHING. There is not one incident in his play, not even the most trivial, that is not to be found in Miss Lee’s novel, occurring exactly in the same manner, brought about by exactly the same agents, and producing exactly the same effects on the plot. And then as to the characters,—not only is every one of them to be found in ‘Kruitznier,’ but every one is to be found there more fully and powerfully developed. Indeed, but for the preparation which we had received from our old familiarity with Miss Lee’s own admirable work, we rather incline to think that we should have been

unable to comprehend the gist of her noble imitator, or rather copier, in several of what seem to be meant for his most elaborate delineations. The fact is, that this undeviating closeness, this humble fidelity of *imitation*, is a thing so perfectly new in any thing worthy of the name of *literature*, that we are sure no one, who has not read the Canterbury Tales, will be able to form the least conception of what it amounts to.

“Those who have never read Miss Lee’s book, will, however, be pleased with this production; for, in truth, the story is one of the most powerfully conceived, one of the most picturesque, and at the same time instructive stories, that we are acquainted with. Indeed, thus led as we are to name Harriet Lee, we cannot allow the opportunity to pass without saying, that we have always considered her works as standing upon the verge of *the very first rank* of excellence; that is to say, as inferior to no English novels whatever, excepting those of Fielding, Sterne, Smollett, Richardson, Defoe, Radcliffe, Godwin, Edgeworth, and the author of Waverley. It would not, perhaps, be going too far to say, that the Canterbury Tales exhibit more of that species of invention which, as we have already remarked, was never common in English literature, than any of the works even of those first-rate novelists we have named, with the single exception of Fielding.

“‘Kruitznor, or the German’s Tale,’ possesses mystery, and yet clearness, as to its structure;

strength of characters, and admirable contrast of characters; and, above all, the most lively interest, blended with and subservient to the most affecting of moral lessons. The main idea which lies at the root of it is, the horror of an erring father, who, having been detected in vice by his son, has dared to defend his own sin, and so to perplex the son's notions of moral rectitude, on finding that the son, in his turn, has pushed the false principles thus instilled to the last and worst extreme — on hearing his own sophistries flung in his face by a — Murderer."

The reader will find a minute analysis, introduced by the above remarks, in Blackwood, vol. xii. p. 710.

TO
THE ILLUSTRIOUS GOETHE,
BY ONE OF HIS HUMBLEST ADMIRERS,
THIS TRAGEDY
IS DEDICATED.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Men. — WERNER.

ULRIC.

STRALENHEIM.

IDENSTEIN.

GABOR.

FRITZ.

HENRICK.

ERIC.

ARNHEIM.

MEISTER.

RODOLPH.

LUDWIG.

Women. — JOSEPHINE.

IDA STRALENHEIM.

Scene — Partly on the Frontier of Silesia, and partly in
Siegendorf Castle, near Prague.

Time — the Close of the Thirty Years' War.

WERNER.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Hall of a decayed Palace near a small Town on the Northern Frontier of Silesia — the Night tempestuous.

WERNER *and* JOSEPHINE *his wife.*

Jos. MY love, be calmer!

Wer.

I am calm.

Jos.

To me —

Yes, but not to thyself: thy pace is hurried,
And no one walks a chamber like to ours
With steps like thine when his heart is at rest.
Were it a garden, I should deem thee happy,
And stepping with the bee from flower to flower;
But *here!*

Wer. 'Tis chill; the tapestry lets through
The wind to which it waves: my blood is frozen.

Jos. Ah, no!

Wer. (smiling). Why! wouldst thou have it so?

Jos. I would
Have it a healthful current.

Wer. Let it flow
Until 't is spilt or checked — how soon, I care not.

Jos. And am I nothing in thy heart?

Wer. All — all.

Jos. Then canst thou wish for that which must
break mine?

Wer. (*approaching her slowly*). But for *thee* I had
been — no matter what,
But much of good and evil; what I am,
Thou knowest; what I might or should have been,
Thou knowest not: but still I love thee, nor
Shall aught divide us.

[*WERNER walks on abruptly, and then approaches*
JOSEPHINE.

The storm of the night
Perhaps affects me; I'm a thing of feelings,
And have of late been sickly, as, alas!
Thou know'st by sufferings more than mine, my love!
In watching me.

Jos. To see thee well is much —
To see thee happy —

Wer. Where hast thou seen such?
Let me be wretched with the rest!

Jos. But think
How many in this hour of tempest shiver
Beneath the biting wind and heavy rain,
Whose every drop bows them down nearer earth,
Which hath no chamber for them save beneath
Her surface.

Wer. And that's not the worst: who cares
For chambers? rest is all. The wretches whom
Thou namest — ay, the wind howls round them, and
The dull and dropping rain saps in their bones
The creeping marrow. I have been a soldier,
A hunter, and a traveller, and am
A beggar, and should know the thing thou talk'st of.

Jos. And art thou not now sheltered from them all?

Wer. Yes. And from these alone.

Jos. And that is something.

Wer. True — to a peasant.

Jos. Should the nobly born
Be thankless for that refuge which their habits
Of early delicacy render more
Needful than to the peasant, when the ebb
Of fortune leaves them on the shoals of life?

Wer. It is not that, thou know'st it is not; we
Have borne all this, I'll not say patiently,
Except in thee — but we have borne it.

Jos. Well?

Wer. Something beyond our outward sufferings
(though
These were enough to gnaw into our souls)
Hath stung me oft, and, more than ever, *now*.
When, but for this untoward sickness, which
Seized me upon this desolate frontier, and *

* [In this play, Lord Byron adopts the same nerveless and pointless kind of blank verse, which was a sorrow to everybody in his former dramatic essays. It is, indeed, "most unmusical, most melancholy." — "Ofs," "tos," "ands," "fors," "bys,"

Hath wasted, not alone my strength, but means,
 And leaves us — no! * this is beyond me! * — but
 For this I had been happy — *thou* been happy —
 The splendor of my rank sustained — my name —
 My father's name — been still upheld; and, more
 Than those —

Jos. (abruptly). My son — our son — our Ulric,
 Been clasped again in these long-empty arms,
 And all a mother's hunger satisfied.
 Twelve years! he was but eight then: — beautiful
 He was, and beautiful he must be now,
 My Ulric! my adored!

Wer. I have been full oft
 The chase of Fortune; now she hath o'ertaken
 My spirit where it cannot turn at bay, —
 Sick, poor, and lonely.

“buts,” and the like, are the most common conclusions of a line; there is no ease, no flow, no harmony, “in linked sweetness long drawn out:” neither is there any thing of abrupt fiery vigor to compensate for these defects. — BLACKWOOD.]

* [This is, indeed, beyond us. If this be poetry, then we were wrong in taking his Lordship's preface for prose. It will run on ten feet as well as the rest — (See p. 135, *antè*.)

“Some of the characters are modified
 Or altered, a few of the names changed, and
 One character (Ida of Strahlenheim)
 Added by myself; but in the rest the
 Original is chiefly followed. When
 I was young (about fourteen, I think) I
 First read this tale, which made a deep impression
 Upon me” —

Nor is there a line in these so lame and halting, but we could point out many in the drama as bad. — CAMPBELL.]

Jos. Lonely ! my dear husband ?

Wer. Or worse — involving all I love, in this
Far worse than solitude. *Alone*, I had died,
And all been over in a nameless grave.

Jos. And I had not outlived thee ; but pray take
Comfort ! We have struggled long ; and they who
strive

With Fortune win or weary her at last,
So that they find the goal or cease to feel
Further. Take comfort, — we shall find our boy.

Wer. We were in sight of him, of every thing
Which could bring compensation for past sorrow —
And to be baffled thus !

Jos. We are not baffled.

Wer. Are we not penniless ?

Jos. We ne'er were wealthy.

Wer. But I was born to wealth, and rank, and
power ;

Enjoyed them, loved them, and, alas ! abused them,
And forfeited them by my father's wrath,
In my o'er-fervent youth ; but for the abuse
Long sufferings have atoned. My father's death
Left the path open, yet not without snares.
This cold and creeping kinsman, who so long
Kept his eye on me, as the snake upon
The fluttering bird, hath ere this time outstept me,
Become the master of my rights, and lord
Of that which lifts him up to princes in
Dominion and domain.

Jos. Who knows ? our son

May have returned back to his grandsire, and
Even now uphold thy rights for thee?

Wer.

'Tis hopeless.

Since his strange disappearance from my father's,
Entailing, as it were, my sins upon
Himself, no tidings have revealed his course.
I parted with him to his grandsire, on
The promise that his anger would stop short
Of the third generation; but Heaven seems
To claim her stern prerogative, and visit
Upon my boy his father's faults and follies.

Jos. I must hope better still, — at least we have yet
Baffled the long pursuit of Stralenheim.

Wer. We should have done, but for this fatal
sickness;

More fatal than a mortal malady,
Because it takes not life, but life's sole solace:
Even now I feel my spirit girt about
By the snares of this avaricious fiend; —
How do I know he hath not tracked us here?

Jos. He does not know thy person; and his spies,
Who so long watched thee, have been left at Ham-
burgh.

Our unexpected journey, and this change
Of name, leaves all discovery far behind:
None hold us here for aught save what we seem.

Wer. Save what we seem! save what we *are*. —
sick beggars,

Even to our very hopes. — Ha! ha!

Jos.

Alas!

That bitter laugh!

Wer. *Who* would read in this form
The high soul of the son of a long line?
Who, in this garb, the heir of princely lands?
Who, in this sunken, sickly eye, the pride
Of rank and ancestry? In this worn cheek
And famine-hollowed brow, the lord of halls
Which daily feast a thousand vassals?

Jos. You
Pondered not thus upon these worldly things,
My Werner! when you deigned to choose for bride
The foreign daughter of a wandering exile.

Wer. An exile's daughter with an outcast son
Were a fit marriage; but I still had hopes
To lift thee to the state we both were born for.
Your father's house was noble, though decayed;
And worthy by its birth to match with ours.

Jos. Your father did not think so, though 't was
noble;
But had my birth been all my claim to match
With thee, I should have deemed it what it is.

Wer. And what is that in thine eyes?

Jos. All which it
Has done in our behalf, — nothing.

Wer. How, — nothing?

Jos. Or worse; for it has been a canker in
Thy heart from the beginning: but for this,
We had not felt our poverty but as
Millions of myriads feel it, cheerfully;
But for these phantoms of thy feudal fathers,
Thou mightst have earned thy bread, as thousands
earn it;

Or, if that seem too humble, tried by commerce,
Or other civic means, to amend thy fortunes.

Wer. (ironically). And been an Hanseatic burgher:
Excellent!

Jos. Whate'er thou mightst have been, to me
thou art

What no state high or low can ever change,
My heart's first choice; — which chose thee, know-
ing neither

Thy birth, thy hopes, thy pride; nought, save thy
sorrows:

While they last, let me comfort or divide them;
When they end, let mine end with them, or thee!*

Wer. My better angel! such I have ever found
thee;

This rashness, or this weakness of my temper,
Ne'er raised a thought to injure thee or thine.
Thou didst not mar my fortunes: my own nature
In youth was such as to unmake an empire,
Had such been my inheritance; but now,
Chastened, subdued, out-worn, and taught to know
Myself, — to lose this for our son and thee!
Trust me, when, in my two-and-twentieth spring,
My father barred me from my father's house,

* [Werner's wife, Josephine, with the exception of Ida, the only female in the drama, is an example of true and spotless virtue. A true woman, she not only well maintains the character of her sex by general integrity, but equally displays the endearing, soft, and unshaken affection of a wife; cherishing and comforting a suffering husband throughout all the adversities of his fate, and all the errors of his own conduct. — MONTHLY REV.]

The last sole scion of a thousand sires,
(For I was then the last,) it hurt me less
Than to behold my boy and my boy's mother
Excluded in their innocence from what
My faults deserved — exclusion ; although then
My passions were all living serpents, and
Twined like the gorgon's round me.

[A loud knocking is heard.]

Jos.

Hark !

Wer.

A knocking !

Jos. Who can it be at this lone hour ? We have
Few visitors.

Wer. And poverty hath none,
Save those who come to make it poorer still.
Well, I am prepared.

*[WERNER puts his hand into his bosom, as if
to search for some weapon.]*

Jos.

Oh ! do not look so. I
Will to the door. It cannot be of import
In this lone spot of wintry desolation : —
The very desert saves man from mankind.

[She goes to the door.]

*Enter IDENSTEIN.**

Iden. A fair good evening to my fairer hostess
And worthy — What's your name, my friend ?

* [The most amusing fellow in the drama is Monsieur Idenstein ; who makes the finest speech, too, beyond comparison, of any of the personages. The only wonder is, where he got it. — ECL. REV.]

Wer. Are you
Not afraid to demand it?

Iden. Not afraid?
Egad! I am afraid. You look as if
I asked for something better than your name,
By the face you put on it.

Wer. Better, sir!

Iden. Better or worse, like matrimony: what
Shall I say more? You have been a guest this month
Here in the prince's palace — (to be sure,
His highness had resigned it to the ghosts
And rats these twelve years — but 't is still a pal-
ace) —

I say you have been our lodger, and as yet
We do not know your name.

Wer. My name is Werner.

Iden. A goodly name, a very worthy name
As e'er was gilt upon a trader's board:
I have a cousin in the lazaretto
Of Hamburgh, who has got a wife who bore
The same. He is an officer of trust,
Surgeon's assistant (hoping to be surgeon),
And has done miracles i' the way of business.
Perhaps you are related to my relative?

Wer. To yours?

Jos. Oh, yes; we are, but distantly.

[*Aside to WERNER.*

Cannot you humor the dull gossip till
We learn his purpose?

Iden. Well, I am glad of that;

I thought so all along, such natural yearnings
Played round my heart:— blood is not water,
cousin;

And so let's have some wine, and drink unto
Our better acquaintance: relatives should be
Friends.

Wer. You appear to have drank enough already;
And if you had not, I've no wine to offer,
Else it were yours: but this you know, or should
know:

You see I am poor, and sick, and will not see
That I would be alone; but to your business!
What brings you here?

Iden. Why, what should bring me here?

Wer. I know not, though I think that I could
guess

That which will send you hence.

Jos. (aside). Patience, dear Werner!

Iden. You don't know what has happened, then?

Jos. How should we?

Iden. The river has o'erflowed.

Jos. Alas! we have known

That to our sorrow for these five days; since
It keeps us here.

Iden. But what you don't know is,
That a great personage, who fain would cross
Against the stream and three postilions' wishes,
Is drowned below the ford, with five post-horses,
A monkey, and a mastiff, and a valet.

Jos. Poor creatures! are you sure?

Iden. Yes, of the monkey,
And the valet, and the cattle; but as yet
We know not if his excellency's dead
Or no; your noblemen are hard to drown,
As it is fit that men in office should be;
But what is certain is, that he has swallowed
Enough of the Oder to have burst two peasants;
And now a Saxon and Hungarian traveller,
Who, at their proper peril, snatched him from
The whirling river, have sent on to crave
A lodging, or a grave, according as
It may turn out with the live or dead body.

Jos. And where will you receive him? here, I
hope,
If we can be of service — say the word.

Iden. Here? no; but in the prince's own apartment,
As fits a noble guest: — 'tis damp, no doubt,
Not having been inhabited these twelve years;
But then he comes from a much damper place,
So scarcely will catch cold in't, if he be
Still liable to cold — and if not, why
He'll be worse lodged to-morrow: ne'ertheless,
I have ordered fire and all appliances
To be got ready for the worst — that is,
In case he should survive.

Jos. Poor gentleman!
I hope he will, with all my heart.

Wer. Intendant,
Have you not learned his name? My Josephine,
[*Aside to his wife.*
Retire: I'll sift this fool. [*Exit JOSEPHINE.*

Iden. His name? oh Lord!
Who knows if he hath now a name or no?
'Tis time enough to ask it when he's able
To give an answer; or if not, to put
His heir's upon his epitaph. Methought
Just now you chid me for demanding names?

Wer. True, true, I did so; you say well and
wisely.

Enter GABOR.

Gab. If I intrude, I crave ——

Iden. Oh, no intrusion!
This is the palace; this a stranger like
Yourself; I pray you make yourself at home:
But where's his excellency? and how fares he?

Gab. Wetly and wearily, but out of peril:
He paused to change his garments in a cottage,
(Where I doffed mine for these, and came on
hither)

And has almost recovered from his drenching.
He will be here anon.

Iden. What ho, there! bustle!
Without there, Herman, Weilburg, Peter, Conrad!

[*Gives directions to different servants who enter.*
A nobleman sleeps here to-night — see that
All is in order in the damask chamber —

Keep up the stove — I will myself to the cellar —
And Madame Idenstein (my consort, stranger,)
Shall furnish forth the bed-apparel; for,
To say the truth, they are marvellous scant of **this**
Within the palace precincts, since his highness
Left it some dozen years ago. And then
His excellency will sup, doubtless?

Gab.

Faith!

I cannot tell; but I should think the pillow
Would please him better than the table after
His soaking in your river: but for fear
Your viands should be thrown away, I mean
To sup myself, and have a friend without
Who will do honor to your good cheer with
A traveller's appetite.

Iden.

But are you sure

His excellency — But his name: what is it?

Gab. I do not know.

Iden.

And yet you saved his life.

Gab. I helped my friend to do so.

Iden.

Well, that's strange,

To save a man's life whom you do not know.

Gab. Not so; for there are some I know so well,
I scarce should give myself the trouble.

Iden.

Pray,

Good friend, and who may you be?

Gab.

By my family,

Hungarian.

Iden.

Which is called?

Gab.

It matters little.

Iden. (aside). I think that all the world are
grown anonymous,
Since no one cares to tell me what he's called!
Pray, has his excellency a large suite?

Gab.

Sufficient.

Iden. How many?

Gab.

I did not count them.

We came up by mere accident, and just
In time to drag him through his carriage window.

Iden. Well, what would I give to save a great man!
No doubt you'll have a swinging sum as recompense.

Gab. Perhaps.

Iden. Now, how much do you reckon on?

Gab. I have not yet put up myself to sale:
In the mean time, my best reward would be
A glass of your Hockheimer — a *green* glass,
Wreathed with rich grapes and Bacchanal devices,
O'erflowing with the oldest of your vintage;
For which I promise you, in case you e'er
Run hazard of being drowned, (although I own
It seems, of all deaths, the least likely for you,)
I'll pull you out for nothing. Quick, my friend,
And think, for every bumper I shall quaff,
A wave the less may roll above your head.

Iden. (aside). I don't much like this fellow —
close and dry

He seems, two things which suit me not; however
Wine he shall have; if that unlocks him not,
I shall not sleep to-night for curiosity.

[*Exit* IDENSTEIN.]

Gab. (to WERNER). This master of the ceremonies is

The intendant of the palace, I presume:
'Tis a fine building, but decayed.

Wer. The apartment
Designed for him you rescued will be found
In fitter order for a sickly guest.

Gab. I wonder then you occupied it not,
For you seem delicate in health.

Wer. (quickly). Sir!

Gab. Pray
Excuse me: have I said aught to offend you?

Wer. Nothing: but we are strangers to each other.

Gab. And that's the reason I would have us
less so:

I thought our bustling guest without had said
You were a chance and passing guest, the counterpart
Of me and my companions.

Wer. Very true.

Gab. Then, as we never met before, and never,
It may be, may again encounter, why,
I thought to cheer up this old dungeon here
(At least to me) by asking you to share
The fare of my companions and myself.

Wer. Pray, pardon me; my health——

Gab. Even as you please.
I have been a soldier, and perhaps am blunt
In bearing.

Wer. I have also served, and can
Requite a soldier's greeting.

Gab. In what service?
The Imperial?

Wer. (*quickly, and then interrupting himself*). I
commanded — no — I mean
I served; but it is many years ago,
When first Bohemia raised her banner 'gainst
The Austrian.

Gab. Well, that's over now, and peace
Has turned some thousand gallant hearts adrift
To live as they best may; and, to say truth,
Some take the shortest.

Wer. What is that?

Gab. Whate'er
They lay their hands on. All Silesia and
Lusatia's woods are tenanted by bands
Of the late troops, who levy on the country
Their maintenance: the Chatelains must keep
Their castle walls — beyond them 'tis but doubtful
Travel for your rich count or full-blown baron.
My comfort is that, wander where I may,
I've little left to lose now.

Wer. And I — nothing.

Gab. That's harder still. You say you were a
soldier.

Wer. I was.

Gab. You look one still. All soldiers are
Or should be comrades, even though enemies.
Our swords when drawn must cross, our engines aim
(While levelled) at each other's hearts; but when
A truce, a peace, or what you will, remits

The steel into its scabbard, and let's sleep
The spark which lights the matchlock, we are
brethren.

You are poor and sickly — I am not rich but healthy
I want for nothing which I cannot want;
You seem devoid of this — wilt share it?

[GABOR pulls out his purse.

Wer.

Who

Told you I was a beggar?

Gab.

You yourself,

In saying you were a soldier during peace-time.

Wer. (*looking at him with suspicion*). You know
me not?

Gab.

I know no man, not even

Myself: how should I then know one I ne'er

Beheld till half an hour since?

Wer.

Sir, I thank you.

Your offer's noble were it to a friend,

And not unkind as to an unknown stranger,

Though scarcely prudent; but no less I thank you.

I am a beggar in all save his trade;

And when I beg of any one, it shall be

Of him who was the first to offer what

Few can obtain by asking. Pardon me.

[Exit WERNER.

Gab. (*solus*). A goodly fellow by his looks, though
worn,

As most good fellows are, by pain or pleasure.

Which tear life out of us before our time;

I scarce know which most quickly: but he seems

To have seen better days, as who has not
Who has seen yesterday? — But here approaches
Our sage intendant, with the wine: however,
For the cup's sake I'll bear the cupbearer.

Enter IDENSTEIN.

Iden. 'Tis here! the supernaculum! twenty years
Of age, if 'tis a day.

Gab. Which epoch makes
Young women and old wine; and 'tis great pity,
Of two such excellent things, increase of years,
Which still improves the one, should spoil the other.
Fill full — Here's to our hostess! — your fair wife!
[*Takes the glass.*]

Iden. Fair! — Well, I trust your taste in wine is
equal
To that you show for beauty; but I pledge you
Nevertheless.

Gab. Is not the lovely woman
I met in the adjacent hall, who, with
An air, and port, and eye, which would have better
Beseemed this palace in its brightest days
(Though in a garb adapted to its present
Abandonment), returned my salutation —
Is not the same your spouse?

Iden. I would she were!
But you're mistaken: — that's the stranger's wife.

Gab. And by her aspect she might be a prince's:
Though time hath touched her too, she still retains
Much beauty, and more majesty.

Iden. And that
Is more than I can say for Madame Idenstein,
At least in beauty: as for majesty,
She has some of its properties which might
Be spared — but never mind!

Gab. I don't. But who
May be this stranger? He too hath a bearing
Above his outward fortunes.

Iden. There I differ.
He's poor as Job, and not so patient; but
Who he may be, or what, or aught of him,
Except his name (and that I only learned
To-night), I know not.

Gab. But how came he here?

Iden. In a most miserable old caleche,
About a month since, and immediately
Fell sick, almost to death. He should have died.

Gab. Tender and true! — but why?

Iden. Why, what is life
Without a living? He has not a stiver.

Gab. In that case, I much wonder that a person
Of your apparent prudence should admit
Guests so forlorn into this noble mansion.

Iden. That's true; but pity, as you know, *does*
make
One's heart commit these follies; and besides,
They had some valuables left at that time,
Which paid their way up to the present hour;
And so I thought they might as well be lodged
Here as at the small tavern, and I gave them

The run of some of the oldest palace rooms.
They served to air them, at the least as long
As they could pay for fire-wood.

Gab. Poor souls!

Iden. Ay,
Exceeding poor.

Gab. And yet unused to poverty,
If I mistake not. Whither were they going?

Iden. Oh! Heaven knows where, unless to
heaven itself.

Some days ago that looked the likeliest journey
For Werner.

Gab. Werner! I have heard the name:
But it may be a feigned one.

Iden. Like enough!
But hark! a noise of wheels and voices, and
A blaze of torches from without. As sure
As destiny, his excellency's come.
I must be at my post: will you not join me,
To help him from his carriage, and present
Your humble duty at the door?

Gab. I dragged him
From out that carriage when he would have given
His barony or county to repel
The rushing river from his gurgling throat.
He has valets now enough: they stood aloof then,
Shaking their dripping ears upon the shore,
All roaring "Help!" but offering none; and as
For *duty* (as you call it) — I did mine *then*,
Now do *yours*. Hence, and bow and cringe him here!

Iden. I cringe!—but I shall lose the opportunity.—
Plague take it! he'll be *here*, and I *not there*!

[*Exit IDENSTEIN hastily.*

Reënter WERNER.

Wer. (to himself). I heard a noise of wheels and
voices. How

All sounds now jar me!

Still here! Is he not [*Perceiving GABOR.*

A spy of my pursuer's? His frank offer

So suddenly, and to a stranger, wore

The aspect of a secret enemy;

For friends are slow at such.

Gab.

Sir, you seem rapt;

And yet the time is not akin to thought,

These old walls will be noisy soon. The baron,

Or count (or whatsoe'er this half-drowned noble

May be), for whom this desolate village and

Its lone inhabitants show more respect

Than did the elements, is come.

Iden. (without).

This way—

This way, your excellency:—have a care,

The staircase is a little gloomy, and

Somewhat decayed; but if we had expected

So high a guest—Pray take my arm, my lord!

Enter STRALENHEIM, IDENSTEIN, and Attendants —
partly his own, and partly Retainers of the Domain
of which IDENSTEIN is Intendant.

Stral. I'll rest me here a moment.

Iden. (to the servants). Ho! a chair!
Instantly, knaves! [*STRALENHEIM sits down*

Wer. (aside). 'Tis he!

Stral. I'm better now.

Who are these strangers?

Iden. Please you, my good lord,
One says he is no stranger.

Wer. (aloud and hastily). Who says that?

[*They look at him with surprise.*

Iden. Why, no one spoke of you or to you! — but
Here's one his excellency may be pleased
To recognize. [*Pointing to GABOR*

Gab. I seek not to disturb
His noble memory.

Stral. I apprehend
This is one of the strangers to whose aid
I owe my rescue. Is not that the other?
[*Pointing to WERNER.*

My state when I was succored must excuse
My uncertainty to whom I owe so much.

Iden. He! — no, my lord! he rather wants for
rescue

Than can afford it. 'Tis a poor sick man,
Travel-tired, and lately risen from a bed
From whence he never dreamed to rise.

Stral. Methought
That there were two.

Gab. There were, in company;
But, in the service rendered to your lordship,
I needs must say but *one*, and he is absent.

The chief part of whatever aid was rendered
Was *his*: it was his fortune to be first.
My will was not inferior, but his strength
And youth outstripped me; therefore do not waste
Your thanks on me. I was but a glad second
Unto a nobler principal.

Stral. Where is he?

An Atten. My lord, he tarried in the cottage where
Your excellency rested for an hour,
And said he would be here to-morrow.

Stral. Till
That hour arrives, I can but offer thanks,
And then ——

Gab. I seek no more, and scarce deserve
So much. My comrade may speak for himself.

Stral. (*fixing his eyes upon WERNER: then aside*).
It cannot be! and yet he must be looked to.
'Tis twenty years since I beheld him with
These eyes; and, though my agents still have kept
Theirs on him, policy has held aloof
My own from his, not to alarm him into
Suspicion of my plan. Why did I leave
At Hamburgh those who would have made assurance
If this be he or no? I thought, ere now,
To have been lord of Siegendorf, and parted
In haste, though even the elements appear
To fight against me, and this sudden flood
May keep me prisoner here till ——

[*He pauses, and looks at WERNER; then resumes.*

This man must

Be watched. If it is he, he is so changed,
His father, rising from his grave again,
Would pass him by unknown. I must be wary.
An error would spoil all.

Iden. Your lordship seems
Pensive. Will it not please you to pass on?

Stral. 'Tis past fatigue which gives my weighed-
down spirit

An outward show of thought. I will to rest.

Iden. The prince's chamber is prepared, with all
The very furniture the prince used when
Last here, in its full splendor.

(Aside). Somewhat tattered,
And devilish damp, but fine enough by torch-light;
And that's enough for your right noble blood
Of twenty quarterings upon a hatchment;
So let their bearer sleep 'neath something like one
Now, as he one day will forever lie.

Stral. (rising and turning to GABOR). Good
night, good people! Sir, I trust to-morrow
Will find me apter to requite your service.
In the mean time I crave your company
A moment in my chamber.

Gab. I attend you.

*Stral. (after a few steps, pauses, and calls WER-
NER).* Friend!

Wer. Sir!

Iden. Sir! Lord — oh Lord! Why don't you say
His lordship, or his excellency? Pray
My lord, excuse this poor man's want of breeding:

He hath not been accustomed to admission
To such a presence.

Stral. (to IDENSTEIN). Peace, intendant!

Iden.

Oh!

I am dumb.

Stral. (to WERNER). Have you been long here?

Wer. Long?

Stral. I sought

An answer, not an echo.

Wer. You may seek

Both from the walls. I am not used to answer

Those whom I know not.

Stral.

Indeed! Ne'er the less,

You might reply with courtesy to what

Is asked in kindness.

Wer.

When I know it such,

I will requite — that is, *reply* — in unison.

Stral. The intendant said, you had been detained
by sickness —

If I could aid you — journeying the same way?

Wer. (*quickly*). I am not journeying the same
way!

Stral.

How know ye

That, ere you know my route?

Wer.

Because there is

But one way that the rich and poor must tread

Together. You diverged from that dread path

Some hours ago, and I some days: henceforth

Our roads must lie asunder, though they tend

All to one home.

Stral. Your language is above
Your station.

Wer. (bitterly). Is it?

Stral. Or, at least, beyond
Your garb.

Wer. 'Tis well that it is not beneath it,
As sometimes happens to the better clad.
But, in a word, what would you with me?

Stral. (startled). I?

Wer. Yes — you! You know me not, and ques-
tion me,
And wonder that I answer not — not knowing
My inquisitor. Explain what you would have,
And then I'll satisfy yourself, or me.

Stral. I knew not that you had reasons for
reserve.

Wer. Many have such: — Have you none?

Stral. None which can
Interest a mere stranger.

Wer. Then forgive
The same unknown and humble stranger, if
He wishes to remain so to the man
Who can have nought in common with him.

Stral. Sir,
I will not balk your humor, though untoward:
I only meant you service — but good night!
Intendant, show the way! (*to GABOR*). Sir, you
will with me?

[*Exeunt STRALENHEIM and attendants; IDEN-
STEIN and GABOR.*]

Wer. (solus). 'Tis he! I am taken in the toils.
Before

I quitted Hamburgh, Giulio, his late steward,
Informed me that he had obtained an order
From Brandenburg's elector, for the arrest
Of Kruitznor (such the name I then bore) when
I came upon the frontier; the free city
Alone preserved my freedom — till I left
Its walls — fool that I was to quit them! But
I deemed this humble garb, and route obscure,
Had baffled the slow hounds in their pursuit.
What's to be done? He knows me not by person;
Nor could aught, save the eye of apprehension,
Have recognized *him*, after twenty years,
We met so rarely and so coldly in
Our youth. But those about him! Now I can
Divine the frankness of the Hungarian, who
No doubt is a mere tool and spy of Stralenheim's,
To sound and to secure me. Without means!
Sick, poor — begirt too with the flooding rivers,
Impassable even to the wealthy, with
All the appliances which purchase modes
Of overpowering peril with men's lives, —
How can I hope! An hour ago methought
My state beyond despair; and now, 't is such,
The past seems paradise. Another day,
And I'm detected, — on the very eve
Of honors, rights, and my inheritance,
When a few drops of gold might save me still
In favoring an escape.

Enter IDENSTEIN and FRITZ in conversation.

Fritz. Immediately.

Iden. I tell you, 'tis impossible.

Fritz. It must

Be tried, however; and if one express
Fail, you must send on others, till the answer
Arrives from Frankfort, from the commandant.

Iden. I will do what I can.

Fritz. And recollect
To spare no trouble; you will be repaid
Tenfold.

Iden. The baron is retired to rest?

Fritz. He hath thrown himself into an easy chair
Beside the fire, and slumbers; and has ordered
He may not be disturbed until eleven,
When he will take himself to bed.

Iden. Before
An hour is past I'll do my best to serve him.

Fritz. Remember! [*Exit FRITZ.*

Iden. The devil take these great men! they
Think all things made for them. Now here must I
Rouse up some half a dozen shivering vassals
From their scant pallets, and, at peril of
Their lives, despatch them o'er the river towards
Frankfort. Methinks the baron's own experience
Some hours ago might teach him fellow-feeling:
But no, "it *must*," and there's an end. How now?
Are you there, Mynheer Werner?

Wer. You have left
Your noble guest right quickly.

Iden. Yes — he's dozing,
And seems to like that none should sleep besides.
Here is a packet for the commandant
Of Frankfort, at all risks and all expenses ;
But I must not lose time: Good night! [*Exit IDEN.*

Wer. "To Frankfort!"
So, so, it thickens! Ay, "the commandant."
This tallies well with all the prior steps
Of this cool, calculating fiend, who walks
Between me and my father's house. No doubt
He writes for a detachment to convey me
Into some secret fortress. — Sooner than
This ——

[*WERNER looks around, and snatches up a knife
lying on a table in a recess.*

Now I am master of myself at least.
Hark, — footsteps! How do I know that Stralenheim
Will wait for even the show of that authority
Which is to overshadow usurpation?
That he suspects me's certain. I'm alone ;
He with a numerous train. I weak ; he strong
In gold, in numbers, rank, authority.
I nameless, or involving in my name
Destruction, till I reach my own domain ;
He full-blown with his titles, which impose
Still further on these obscure petty burghers
Than they could do elsewhere. Hark ! nearer still !
I'll to the secret passage, which communicates
With the —— No ! all is silent — 't was my fancy ! —
Still as the breathless interval between

The flash and thunder:—I must hush my soul
Amidst its perils. Yet I will retire,
To see if still be unexplored the passage
I wot of: it will serve me as a den
Of secrecy for some hours, at the worst.

[WERNER *draws a panel, and exit, closing it
after him.*

Enter GABOR and JOSEPHINE.

Gab. Where is your husband?

Jos. *Here, I thought: I left him*
Not long since in his chamber. But these rooms
Have many outlets, and he may be gone
To accompany the intendant.

Gab. Baron Stralenheim
Put many questions to the intendant on
The subject of your lord, and, to be plain,
I have my doubts if he means well.

Jos. *Alas!*
What can there be in common with the proud
And wealthy baron, and the unknown Werner?

Gab. That you know best.

Jos. Or, if it were so, how
Come you to stir yourself in his behalf,
Rather than that of him whose life you saved?

Gab. I helped to save him, as in peril; but
I did not pledge myself to serve him in
Oppression. I know well these nobles, and
Their thousand modes of trampling on the poor.
I have proved them; and my spirit boils up when

I find them practising against the weak: —
This is my only motive.

Jos. It would be
Not easy to persuade my consort of
Your good intentions.

Gab. Is he so suspicious?

Jos. He was not once; but time and troubles have
Made him what you beheld.

Gab. I'm sorry for it.
Suspicion is a heavy armor, and
With its own weight impedes more than protects.
Good night! I trust to meet with him at daybreak.
[*Exit GABOR.*]

*Reënter IDENSTEIN and some Peasants. JOSEPHINE
retires up the Hall.*

First Peasant. But if I'm drowned?

Iden. Why, you will be well paid for 't,
And have risked more than drowning for as much,
I doubt not.

Second Peasant. But our wives and families?

Iden. Cannot be worse off than they are, and may
Be better.

Third Peasant. I have neither, and will venture.

Iden. That's right. A gallant carle, and fit to be
A soldier. I'll promote you to the ranks
In the prince's body-guard — if you succeed;
And you shall have besides, in sparkling coin,
Two thalers.

Third Peasant. No more!

Iden. Out upon your avarice!
Can that low vice alloy so much ambition?
I tell thee, fellow, that two thalers in
Small change will subdivide into a treasure.
Do not five hundred thousand heroes daily
Risk lives and souls for the tithe of one thaler?
When had you half the sum?

Third Peasant. Never — but ne'er
The less I must have three.

Iden. Have you forgot
Whose vassal you were born, knave?

Third Peasant. No — the prince's,
And not the stranger's.

Iden. Sirrah! in the prince's
Absence, I'm sovereign; and the baron is
My intimate connection; — "Cousin Idenstein!
(Quoth he) you'll order out a dozen villains."
And so, you villains! troop — march — march, I say;
And if a single dog's-ear of this packet
Be sprinkled by the Oder — look to it!
For every page of paper, shall a hide
Of yours be stretched as parchment on a drum,
Like Ziska's skin, to beat alarm to all
Refractory vassals, who can not effect
Impossibilities — Away, ye earth worms!

[*Exit, driving them out.*]

Jos. (coming forward). I fain would shun these
scenes, too oft repeated,
Of feudal tyranny o'er petty victims;
I cannot aid, and will not witness such.

Even here, in this remote, unnamed, dull spot,
The dimmest in the district's map, exist
The insolence of wealth in poverty
O'er something poorer still — the pride of rank
In servitude, o'er something still more servile ;
And vice in misery affecting still
A tattered splendor. What a state of being !
In Tuscany, my own dear sunny land,
Our nobles were but citizens and merchants,
Like Cosmo. We had evils, but not such
As these ; and our all-ripe and gushing valleys
Made poverty more cheerful, where each herb
Was in itself a meal, and every vine
Rained, as it were, the beverage which makes glad
The heart of man ; and the ne'er unfelt sun
(But rarely clouded, and when clouded, leaving
His warmth behind in memory of his beams)
Makes the worn mantle, and the thin robe, less
Oppressive than an emperor's jewelled purple.
But, here ! the despots of the north appear
To imitate the ice-wind of their clime,
Searching the shivering vassal through his rags,
To wring his soul — as the bleak elements
His form. And 't is to be amongst these sovereigns
My husband pants ! and such his pride of birth —
That twenty years of usage, such as no
Father born in a humble state could nerve
His soul to persecute a son withal,
Hath changed no atom of his early nature ;
But I, born nobly also, from my father's

Kindness was taught a different lesson. Father!
May thy long-tried and now rewarded spirit
Look down on us and our so long desired
Ulric! I love my son, as thou didst me!
What's that? Thou, Werner! can it be? and thus?

*Enter WERNER hastily, with the knife in his hand, by
the secret panel, which he closes hurriedly after him.*

Wer. (not at first recognizing her). Discovered!
then I'll stab —— *(recognizing her.)*
Ah! Josephine,

Why art thou not at rest?

Jos.

What rest? My God!

What doth this mean?

Wer. (showing a rouleau). Here's gold — gold,
Josephine,

Will rescue us from this detested dungeon.

Jos. And how obtained? — that knife!

Wer.

'Tis bloodless — *yet.*

Away — we must to our chamber.

Jos.

But whence comest thou?

Wer. Ask not! but let us think where we shall
go —

This — this will make us way — *(showing the gold)* —
I'll fit them now.

Jos. I dare not think thee guilty of dishonor.

Wer. Dishonor!

Jos.

I have said it.

Wer.

Let us hence:

'Tis the last night, I trust, that we need pass here.

Jos. And not the worst, I hope.

Wer. Hope! I make *sure*.

But let us to our chamber.

Jos. Yet one question —

What hast thou *done*?

Wer. (*fiercely*). Left one thing *undone*, which
Had made all well: let me not think of it!

Away!

Jos. Alas, that I should doubt of thee! [*Exeunt*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Hall in the same Palace.

Enter IDENSTEIN and Others.

Iden. Fine doings! goodly doings! honest doings!
A baron pillaged in a prince's palace!

Where, till this hour, such a sin ne'er was heard of.

Fritz. It hardly could, unless the rats despoiled
The mice of a few shreds of tapestry.

Iden. Oh! that I e'er should live to see this day!
The honor of our city's gone for ever.

Fritz. Well, but now to discover the delinquent.
The baron is determined not to lose
This sum without a search.

Iden. And so am I.

Fritz. But whom do you suspect?

Iden. Suspect! all people
Without — within — above — below — Heaven help
me!

Fritz. Is there no other entrance to the chamber?

Iden. None whatsoever.

Fritz. Are you sure of that?

Iden. Certain. I have lived and served here since
my birth,

And if there were such, must have heard of such,
Or seen it.

Fritz. Then it must be some one who
Had access to the antechamber.

Iden. Doubtless.

Fritz. The man called *Werner's* poor!

Iden. Poor as a miser.

But lodged so far off, in the other wing,
By which there's no communication with
The baron's chamber, that it can't be he.
Besides, I bade him "good night" in the hall,
Almost a mile off, and which only leads
To his own apartment, about the same time
When this burglarious, larcenous felony
Appears to have been committed.

Fritz. There's another,
The stranger —

Iden. The Hungarian?

Fritz. He who helped
To fish the baron from the Oder.

Iden. Not
Unlikely. But, hold — might it not have been,
One of the suite?

Fritz. How? *We*, sir!

Iden. No — not *you*,
But some of the inferior knaves. You say
The baron was asleep in the great chair —
The velvet chair — in his embroidered night-gown;
His toilet spread before him, and upon it
A cabinet with letters, papers, and
Several rouleaux of gold; of which *one* only
Has disappeared: — the door unbolted, with
No difficult access to any.

Fritz. Good sir,
Be not so quick; the honor of the corps
Which forms the baron's household's unimpeached
From steward to scullion, save in the fair way
Of peculation; such as in accompts,
Weights, measures, larder, cellar, buttery,
Where all men take their prey; as also in
Postage of letters, gathering of rents,
Purveying feasts, and understanding with
The honest trades who furnish noble masters:
But for your petty, picking, downright thievery,
We scorn it as we do board-wages. Then
Had one of our folks done it, he would not
Have been so poor a spirit as to hazard
His neck for *one* rouleau,* but have swooped all;
Also the cabinet, if portable.

Iden. There is some sense in that —

Fritz. No, sir, be sure
'Twas none of our corps; but some petty, trivial
Picker and stealer, without art or genius.

The only question is — Who else could have
Access, save the Hungarian and yourself?

Iden. You don't mean me?

Fritz. No, sir; I honor more
Your talents —

Iden. And my principles, I hope.

Fritz. Of course. But to the point: What's to
be done? [said.

Iden. Nothing — but there's a good deal to be
We'll offer a reward; move heaven and earth,
And the police (though there's none nearer than
Frankfort); post notices in manuscript
(For we've no printer); and set by my clerk
To read them (for few can, save he and I).
We'll send out villains to strip beggars, and
Search empty pockets; also, to arrest
All gipsies, and ill-clothed and sallow people.
Prisoners we'll have at least, if not the culprit;
And for the baron's gold — if 't is not found,
At least he shall have the full satisfaction
Of melting twice its substance in the raising
The ghost of this rouleau. Here's alchemy
For your lord's losses!

Fritz. He hath found a better.

Iden. Where?

Fritz. In a most immense inheritance.
The late Count Siegendorf, his distant kinsman,
Is dead near Prague, in his castle, and my lord
Is on his way to take possession.

Iden. Was there
No heir?

Fritz. Oh, yes ; but he has disappeared
Long from the world's eye, and perhaps the world.
A prodigal son, beneath his father's ban
For the last twenty years ; for whom his sire
Refused to kill the fatted calf ; and, therefore,
If living, he must chew the husks still. But
The baron would find means to silence him,
Were he to reappear : he's politic,
And has much influence with a certain court.

Iden. He's fortunate.

Fritz. 'Tis true, there is a grandson,
Whom the late count reclaimed from his son's hands
And educated as his heir ; but then
His birth is doubtful.

Iden. How so ?

Fritz. His sire made
A left-hand, love, imprudent sort of marriage,
With an Italian exile's dark-eyed daughter :
Noble, they say, too ; but no match for such
A house as Siegendorf's. The grandsire ill
Could brook the alliance ; and could ne'er be brought
To see the parents, though he took the son.

Iden. If he's a lad of mettle, he may yet
Dispute your claim, and weave a web that may
Puzzle your baron to unravel.

Fritz. Why,
For mettle, he has quite enough : they say,
He forms a happy mixture of his sire
And grandsire's qualities, — impetuous as
The former, and deep as the latter ; but

The strangest is, that he too disappeared
Some months ago.

Iden. The devil he did!

Fritz. Why, yes:

It must have been at his suggestion, at
An hour so critical as was the eve
Of the old man's death, whose heart was broken by it.

Iden. Was there no cause assigned?

Fritz. Plenty, no doubt,
And none perhaps the true one. Some averred
It was to seek his parents; some because
The old man held his spirit in so strictly
(But that could scarce be, for he doted on him);
A third believed he wished to serve in war,
But peace being made soon after his departure,
He might have since returned, were that the motive;
A fourth set charitably have surmised,
As there was something strange and mystic in him,
That in the wild exuberance of his nature
He had joined the black bands, who lay waste
Lusatia,
The mountains of Bohemia and Silesia,
Since the last years of war had dwindled into
A kind of general condottiero system
Of bandit warfare; each troop with its chief,
And all against mankind.

Iden. That cannot be.

A young heir, bred to wealth and luxury,
To risk his life and honors with disbanded
Soldiers and desperadoes!

Fritz. Heaven best knows !
But there are human natures so allied
Unto the savage love of enterprise,
That they will seek for peril as a pleasure.
I've heard that nothing can reclaim your Indian,
Or tame the tiger, though their infancy
Were fed on milk and honey. After all,
Your Wallenstein, your Tilly and Gustavus,
Your Bannier, and your Torstenson and Weimar,
Were but the same thing upon a grand scale ;
And now that they are gone, and peace proclaimed,
They who would follow the same pastime must
Pursue it on their own account. Here comes
The baron, and the Saxon stranger, who
Was his chief aid in yesterday's escape,
But did not leave the cottage by the Oder
Until this morning.

Enter STRALENHEIM and ULRIC.

Stral. Since you have refused
All compensation, gentle stranger, save
Inadequate thanks, you almost check even them
Making me feel the worthlessness of words,
And blush at my own barren gratitude,
They seem so niggardly, compared with what
Your courteous courage did in my behalf ——

Ulr. I pray you press the theme no further.

Stral. But
Can I not serve you? You are young, and of
That mould which throws out heroes ; fair in favor,

Brave, I know, by my living now to say so ;
And doubtlessly, with such a form and heart,
Would look into the fiery eyes of war,
As ardently for glory as you dared
An obscure death to save an unknown stranger
In an as perilous, but opposite, element.
You are made for the service : I have served ;
Have rank by birth and soldiership, and friends,
Who shall be yours. 'Tis true this pause of peace
Favors such views at present scantily ;
But 'twill not last, men's spirits are too stirring ;
And, after thirty years of conflict, peace
Is but a petty war, as the times show us
In every forest, or a mere armed truce.
War will reclaim his own ; and, in the mean time,
You might obtain a post, which would insure
A higher soon, and, by my influence, fail not
To rise. I speak of Brandenburg, wherein
I stand well with the elector ; in Bohemia,
Like you, I am a stranger, and we are now
Upon its frontier.

Ulr. You perceive my garb
Is Saxon, and of course my service due
To my own sovereign. If I must decline
Your offer, 'tis with the same feeling which
Induced it.

Stral. Why, this is mere usury !
I owe my life to you, and you refuse
'The acquittance of the interest of the debt,
To heap more obligations on me, till
I bow beneath them.

Ulr. You shall say so when
I claim the payment.

Stral. Well, sir, since you will not —
You are nobly born?

Ulr. I have heard my kinsmen say so.

Stral. Your actions show it. Might I ask your
name?

Ulr. Ulric.

Stral. Your house's?

Ulr. When I'm worthy of it,
I'll answer you.

Stral. (aside). Most probably an Austrian,
Whom these unsettled times forbid to boast
His lineage on these wild and dangerous frontiers,
Where the name of his country is abhorred.

[*Aloud to FRITZ and IDENSTEIN.*

So, sirs! how have ye sped in your researches?

Iden. Indifferent well, your excellency.

Stral. Then
I am to deem the plunderer is caught?

Iden. Humph! — not exactly.

Stral. Or at least suspected?

Iden. Oh! for that matter, very much suspected.

Stral. Who may he be?

Iden. Why, don't *you* know, my lord?

Stral. How should I? I was fast asleep.

Iden. And so
Was I, and that's the cause I know no more
Than does your excellency.

Stral. Dolt!

Iden. Why, if

Your lordship, being robbed, do n't recognize
The rogue ; how should I, not being robbed, identify

The thief among so many ? In the crowd,
May it please your excellency, your thief looks
Exactly like the rest, or rather better :
'Tis only at the bar and in the dungeon
That wise men know your felon by his features ;
But I'll engage, that if seen there but once,
Whether he be found criminal or no,
His face shall be so.

Stral. (to FRITZ). Prithee, Fritz, inform me
What hath been done to trace the fellow ?

Fritz.

Faith !

My lord, not much as yet, except conjecture.

Stral. Besides the loss (which, I must own, affects
me

Just now materially), I needs would find
The villain out of public motives ; for
So dexterous a spoiler, who could creep
Through my attendants, and so many peopled
And lighted chambers, on my rest, and snatch
The gold before my scarce-closed eyes, would soon
Leave bare your borough, Sir Intendant !

Iden.

True ;

If there were aught to carry off, my lord.

Ulr. What is all this ?

Stral. You joined us but this morning,
And have not heard that I was robbed last night.

Ulr. Some rumor of it reached me as I passed

The outer chambers of the palace, but
I know no further.

Stral. It is a strange business ;
The intendant can inform you of the facts.

Iden. Most willingly. You see ——

Stral. (impatiently). Defer your tale,
Till certain of the hearer's patience.

Iden. That
Can only be approved by proofs. You see ——

*Stral. (again interrupting him, and addressing
ULRIC).*

In short, I was asleep upon a chair,
My cabinet before me, with some gold
Upon it (more than I much like to lose,
Though in part only) : some ingenious person
Contrived to glide through all my own attendants,
Besides those of the place, and bore away
A hundred golden ducats, which to find
I would be fain, and there's an end. Perhaps
You (as I still am rather faint) would add
To yesterday's great obligation, this,
Though slighter, yet not slight, to aid these men
(Who seem but lukewarm) in recovering it?

Ulr. Most willingly, and without loss of time —
(*To IDENSTEIN.*) Come hither, mynheer!

Iden. But so much haste bodes
Right little speed, and ——

Ulr. Standing motionless
None ; so let's march : we'll talk as we go on.

Iden. But ——

Ulr. Show the spot, and then I'll answer you.

Fritz. I will, sir, with his excellency's leave.

Stral. Do so, and take yon old ass with you.

Fritz. Hence!

Ulr. Come on, old oracle, expound thy riddle!

[*Exit with IDENSTEIN and FRITZ.*

Stral. (solus). A stalwart, active, soldier-looking stripling,

Handsome as Hercules ere his first labor,

And with a brow of thought beyond his years

When in repose, till his eye kindles up

In answering yours. I wish I could engage him:

I have need of some such spirits near me now,

For this inheritance is worth a struggle.

And though I am not the man to yield without one,

Neither are they who now rise up between me

And my desire. The boy, they say, 's a bold one;

But he hath played the truant in some hour

Of freakish folly, leaving fortune to

Champion his claims. That's well. The father, whom

For years I've tracked, as does the blood-hound,

never

In sight, but constantly in scent, had put me

To fault; but *here* I *have* him, and that's better.

It must be *he*! All circumstance proclaims it;

And careless voices, knowing not the cause

Of my inquiries, still confirm it.—Yes!

The man, his bearing, and the mystery

Of his arrival, and the time; the account, too,

The intendant gave (for I have not beheld her)

Of his wife's dignified but foreign aspect ;
Besides the antipathy with which we met,
As snakes and lions shrink back from each other
By secret instinct that both must be foes
Deadly, without being natural prey to either ;
All — all — confirm it to my mind. However,
We 'll grapple, ne'ertheless. In a few hours
The order comes from Frankfort, if these waters
Rise not the higher (and the weather favors
Their quick abatement), and I'll have him safe
Within a dungeon, where he may avouch
His real estate and name ; and there's no harm done,
Should he prove other than I deem. This robbery
(Save for the actual loss) is lucky also :
He's poor, and that's suspicious — he's unknown,
And that's defenceless. — True, we have no proofs
Of guilt, — but what hath he of innocence ?
Were he a man indifferent to my prospects,
In other bearings, I should rather lay
The inculcation on the Hungarian, who
Hath something which I like not ; and alone
Of all around, except the intendant, and
The prince's household and my own, had ingress
Familiar to the chamber.

Enter GABOR.

Friend, how fare you ?

Gab. As those who fare well everywhere, when
they

Have supped and slumbered, no great matter how —
And you, my lord ?

Stral. Better in rest than purse :
Mine inn is like to cost me dear.

Gab. I heard
Of your late loss ; but 'tis a trifle to
One of your order.

Stral. You would hardly think so,
Were the loss yours.

Gab. I never had so much
(At once) in my whole life, and therefore am not
Fit to decide. But I came here to seek you.
Your couriers are turned back — I have outstripped
them,
In my return.

Stral. You ! — Why ?

Gab. I went at daybreak,
To watch for the abatement of the river,
As being anxious to resume my journey.
Your messengers were all checked like myself ;
And, seeing the case hopeless, I await
The current's pleasure.

Stral. Would the dogs were in it !
Why did they not, at least, attempt the passage ?
I ordered this at all risks.

Gab. Could you order
The Oder to divide, as Moses did
The Red Sea (scarcely redder than the flood
Of the swoln stream), and be obeyed, perhaps
They might have ventured.

Stral. I must see to it :
The knaves ! the slaves ! — but they shall smart for
this. [*Exit* STRALENHEIM.]

Gab. (solus). There goes my noble, feudal, self-willed baron!

Epitomè of what brave chivalry
The preux chevaliers of the good old times
Have left us. Yesterday he would have given
His lands (if he hath any), and, still dearer,
His sixteen quarterings, for as much fresh air
As would have filled a bladder, while he lay
Gurgling and foaming half way through the window
Of his o'erset and water-logged conveyance.
And now he storms at half a dozen wretches
Because they love their lives too! Yet, he's right:
'Tis strange they should, when such as he may put
 them
To hazard at his pleasure. Oh! thou world!
Thou art indeed a melancholy jest! [*Exit GABOR.*]

SCENE II.

The Apartment of WERNER, in the Palace.

Enter JOSEPHINE and ULRIC.

Jos. Stand back, and let me look on thee again!
My Ulric! — my beloved! — can it be —
After twelve years?

Ulr. My dearest mother!

Jos. Yes!

My dream is realized — how beautiful! —
How more than all I sighed for! Heaven receive
A mother's thanks! — a mother's tears of joy!

This is indeed thy work! — At such an hour, too.
He comes not only as a son, but saviour.

Ulr. If such a joy await me, it must double
What I now feel, and lighten from my heart
A part of the long debt of duty, not
Of love (for that was ne'er withheld) — forgive me!
This long delay was not my fault.

Jos. I know it,
But cannot think of sorrow now, and doubt
If I e'er felt it, 'tis so dazzled from
My memory by this oblivious transport! —
My son!

Enter WERNER.

Wer. What have we here, — more strangers?

Jos. No!

Look upon him! What do you see?

Wer. A stripling,

For the first time —

Ulr. (kneeling). For twelve long years, my father!

Wer. Oh, God!

Jos. He faints!

Wer. No — I am better now —

Ulric! (*Embraces him.*)

Ulr. My father, Siegendorf!

Wer. (starting). Hush! boy —

The walls may hear that name!

Ulr. What then?

Wer. Why, then —

But we will talk of that anon. Remember,

I must be known here but as Werner. Come!
Come to my arms again! Why, thou look'st all
I should have been, and was not. Josephine!
Sure 'tis no father's fondness dazzles me;
But, had I seen that form amid ten thousand
Youth of the choicest, my heart would have chosen
This for my son!

Ulr. And yet you knew me not!

Wer. Alas! I have had that upon my soul
Which makes me look on all men with an eye
That only knows the evil at first glance.

Ulr. My memory served me far more fondly: I
Have not forgotten aught; and oft-times in
The proud and princely halls of — (I'll not name
them,

As you say that 'tis perilous) — but i' the pomp
Of your sire's feudal mansion, I looked back
To the Bohemian mountains many a sunset,
And wept to see another day go down
O'er thee and me, with those huge hills between us.
They shall not part us more.

Wer. I know not that.

Are you aware my father is no more?

Ulr. Oh, heavens! I left him in a green old
age,

And looking like the oak, worn, but still steady
Amidst the elements, whilst younger trees
Fell fast around him. 'Twas scarce three months
since.

Wer. Why did you leave him?

Jos. (*embracing* ULRIC). Can you ask that question?

Is he not *here*?

Wer. True; he hath sought his parents,
And found them; but, oh! *how*, and in what state!

Ulr. All shall be bettered. What we have to do
Is to proceed, and to assert our rights,
Or rather yours; for I waive all, unless
Your father has disposed in such a sort
Of his broad lands as to make mine the foremost,
So that I must prefer my claim for form:
But I trust better, and that all is yours.

Wer. Have you not heard of Stralenheim?

Ulr. I saved
His life but yesterday: he's here.

Wer. You saved
The serpent who will sting us all!

Ulr. You speak
Riddles: what is this *Stralenheim* to us?

Wer. Every thing. One who claims our father's
lands;
Our distant kinsman, and our nearest foe.

Ulr. I never heard his name till now. The count,
Indeed, spoke sometimes of a kinsman, who,
If his own line should fail, might be remotely
Involved in the succession; but his titles
Were never named before me — and what then?
His right must yield to ours.

Wer. Ay, if at Prague:
But here he is all-powerful; and has spread

Snares for thy father, which, if hitherto
He hath escaped them, is by fortune, not
By favor.

Ulr. Doth he personally know you?

Wer. No; but he guesses shrewdly at my person,
As he betrayed last night; and I, perhaps,
But owe my temporary liberty
To his uncertainty.

Ulr. I think you wrong him
(Excuse me for the phrase); but Stralenheim
Is not what you prejudge him, or, if so,
He owes me something both for past and present. •
I saved his life, he therefore trusts in me.
He hath been plundered, too, since he came hither:
Is sick; a stranger; and as such not now
Able to trace the villain who hath robbed him:
I have pledged myself to do so; and the business
Which brought me here was chiefly that:* but I
Have found, in searching for another's dross,
My own whole treasure — you, my parents!

Wer. (agitatedly). Who
Taught you to mouth that name of "villain?"

* [The following is the original passage in the novel: — "Stralenheim," said Conrad; "does not appear to be altogether the man you take him for: but were it even otherwise, he owes me gratitude not only for the past, but for what he supposes to be my present employment. I saved his life, and he therefore places confidence in me. He hath been robbed last night — is sick — a stranger — and in no condition to discover the villain who has plundered him; and the business on which I sought the intendant was chiefly that," etc. — MISS LEE.]

Ulr. What
More noble name belongs to common thieves?

Wer. Who taught you thus to brand an unknown
being
With an infernal stigma?

Ulr. My own feelings
Taught me to name a ruffian from his deeds.

Wer. Who taught you, long-sought and ill-found
boy! that
It would be safe for my own son to insult me?

Ulr. I named a villain. What is there in common
With such a being and my father?

Wer. Every thing!
That ruffian is thy father! *

Jos. Oh, my son!
Believe him not — and yet! ——— (*her voice falters*).

Ulr. (*starts, looks earnestly at WERNER, and then
says slowly,*) And you avow it?

Wer. Ulric, before you dare despise your father,
Learn to divine and judge his actions. *Young,*
Rash, new to life, and reared in luxury's lap,
Is it for you to measure passion's force,

* [“ ‘And who,’ said he, starting furiously from his seat, ‘has entitled you to brand thus with ignominious epithets a being you do not know? Who,’ he added, with increasing agitation, ‘has taught you that it would be even safe for my son to insult me?’ — ‘It is not necessary to know the person of a ruffian,’ replied Conrad indignantly, ‘to give him the appellation he merits: — and what is there in common between my father and such a character?’ — ‘Every thing,’ said Siegendorf, bitterly, — ‘for that ruffian was your father!’ ” — *IBID.*]

Or misery's temptation? Wait — (not long,
It cometh like the night, and quickly) — Wait! —
Wait till, like me, your hopes are blighted* — till
Sorrow and shame are handmaids of your cabin;
Famine and poverty your guests at table;
Despair your bed-fellow — then rise, but not
From sleep, and judge! Should that day e'er ar-
rive —

Should you see then the serpent, who hath coiled
Himself around all that is dear and noble
Of you and yours, lie slumbering in your path,
With but *his* folds between your steps and happiness,
When *he*, who lives but to tear from you name,
Lands, life itself, lies at your mercy, with
Chance your conductor; midnight for your mantle;
The bare knife in your hand, and earth asleep,
Even to your deadliest foe; and he as't were
Inviting death, by looking like it, while

* ["Conrad, before you thus presume to chastise me with your eye, learn to understand my actions. Young, and inexperienced in the world — reposing hitherto in the bosom of indulgence and luxury, is it for you to judge of the force of the passions, or the temptations of misery? Wait till, like me, you have blighted your fairest hopes — have endured humiliation and sorrow — poverty and famine — before you pretend to judge of their effects on you! Should that miserable day ever arrive — should you see the being at your mercy who stands between you and every thing that is dear or noble in life! who is ready to tear from you your name — your inheritance — your very life itself — congratulate your own heart, if, like me, you are content with petty plunder, and are not tempted to exterminate a serpent, who now lives, perhaps, to sting us all!" — *IBID.*]

His death alone can save you : — Thank your God !
If then, like me, content with petty plunder,
You turn aside ——— I did so.

Ulr.

But ———

Wer. (abruptly).

Hear me !

I will not brook a human voice — scarce dare
Listen to my own (if that be human still) —
Hear me ! You do not know this man — I do.*
He's mean, deceitful, avaricious. You
Deem yourself safe, as young and brave ; but learn
None are secure from desperation, few
From subtilty. My worst foe, Stralenheim,
Housed in a prince's palace, couched within
A prince's chamber, lay below my knife !
An instant — a mere motion — the least impulse —
Had swept him and all fears of mine from earth.
He was within my power — my knife was raised —
Withdrawn — and I'm in his : — are you not so ?
Who tells you that he knows you *not* ? Who says
He hath not lured you here to end you ? or
To plunge you, with your parents, in a dungeon ?

[*He pauses.*

Ulr. Proceed — proceed !

Wer.

Me he hath ever known,

* [“You do not know this man,” continued he: “I do! I believe him to be mean, sordid, deceitful! You will conceive yourself safe, because you are young and brave! Learn, however, none are so secure but desperation or subtilty may reach them! Stralenheim, in the palace of a prince, was in my power! My knife was held over him — I forbore — and I am now in his,” etc. etc. — *IBID.*]

And hunted through each change of time — name —
fortune —

And why not *you*? Are you more versed in men?
He wound snares round me; flung along my path
Reptiles, whom, in my youth, I would have spurned
Even from my presence; but, in spurning now,
Fill only with fresh venom. Will you be
More patient? Ulric! — Ulric! — there are crimes
Made venial by the occasion, and temptations
Which nature cannot master or forbear.*

Ulr. (*looks first at him, and then at Josephine*).
My mother!

Wer. Ay! I thought so: you have now
Only one parent. I have lost alike
Father and son, and stand alone.

Ulr. But stay!

[WERNER *rushes out of the chamber*.

Jos. (*to ULRIC*). Follow him not, until this storm
of passion

Abates. Think'st thou, that were it well for him,
I had not followed?

Ulr. I obey you, mother,

* ["Me he has known invariably through every change of fortune or of name — and why not you? Me he has entrapped — are you more discreet? He has wound the snares of Idenstein around me; — of a reptile whom, a few years ago, I would have spurned from my presence, and whom, in spurning now, I have furnished with fresh venom. Will you be more patient? Conrad, Conrad, there are crimes rendered venial by the occasion, and temptations too exquisite for human fortitude to master or forbear," etc. etc. — *IBID.*]

Although reluctantly. My first act shall not
Be one of disobedience.

Jos. Oh ! he is good !
Condemn him not from his own mouth, but trust
To me, who have borne so much with him, and for
him,
That this is but the surface of his soul,
And that the depth is rich in better things.

Ulr. These then are but my father's principles ?
My mother thinks not with him ?

Jos. Nor doth he
Think as he speaks. Alas ! long years of grief
Have made him sometimes thus.

Ulr. Explain to me
More clearly, then, these claims of Stralenheim,
That, when I see the subject in its bearings,
I may prepare to face him, or at least
To extricate you from your present perils.
I pledge myself to accomplish this — but would
I had arrived a few hours sooner !

Jos. Ay !
Hadst thou but done so !

Enter GABOR and IDENSTEIN, with Attendants.

Gab. (to *ULRIC*). I have sought you, comrade.
So this is my reward !

Ulr. What do you mean ?

Gab. 'Sdeath ! have I lived to these years, and
for this ! [would ——
(To *IDENSTEIN*). But for your age and folly, I

Iden.

Help!

Hands off! Touch an intendant!

Gab.

Do not think

I'll honor you so much as save your throat
From the Ravenstone* by choking you myself.

Iden. I thank you for the respite: but there are
Those who have greater need of it than me.

Ulr. Unriddle this vile wrangling, or ——*Gab.*

At once, then,

The baron has been robbed, and upon me
This worthy personage has deigned to fix
His kind suspicions — me! whom he ne'er saw
Till yester' evening.

Iden.

Wouldst have me suspect
My own acquaintances? You have to learn
That I keep better company.

Gab.

You shall

Keep the best shortly, and the last for all men,
The worms! you hound of malice!

[GABOR seizes on him.

Ulr. (interfering).

Nay, no violence:

He's old, unarmed — be temperate, Gabor!

Gab. (letting go IDENSTEIN).

True:

I am a fool to lose myself because
Fools deem me knave: it is their homage.

Ulr. (to IDENSTEIN).

How

Fare you?

Iden.

Help!

* The Ravenstone, "Rabenstein," is the *stone gibbet* of Germany, and so called from the ravens perching on it.

Ulr. I have helped you.

Iden. Kill him ! then

I'll say so.

Gab. I am calm — live on !

Iden. That's more

Than you shall do, if there be judge or judgment
In Germany. The baron shall decide !

Gab. Does *he* abet you in your accusation ?

Iden. Does he not ?

Gab. Then next time let him go sink
Ere I go hang for snatching him from drowning.
But here he comes !

Enter STRALENHEIM.

Gab. (*goes up to him*). My noble lord, I'm here !

Stral. Well, sir !

Gab. Have you aught with me ?

Stral. What should I
Have with you ?

Gab. You know best, if yesterday's
Flood has not washed away your memory ;
But that's a trifle. I stand here accused,
In phrases not equivocal, by yon
Intendant, of the pillage of your person
Or chamber :—is the charge your own or his ?

Stral. I accuse no man.

Gab. Then you acquit me, baron ?

Stral. I know not whom to accuse, or to acquit,
Or scarcely to suspect.

Gab. But you at least
Should know whom *not* to suspect. I am insulted —

Oppressed here by these menials, and I look
To you for remedy — teach them their duty !
To look for thieves at home were part of it,
If duly taught ; but, in one word, if I
Have an accuser, let it be a man
Worthy to be so of a man like me.
I am your equal.

Stral. You !

Gab. Ay, sir ; and, for
Aught that you know, superior ; but proceed —
I do not ask for hints, and surmises,
And circumstance, and proofs ; I know enough
Of what I have done for you, and what you owe me,
To have at least waited your payment rather
Than paid myself, had I been eager of
Your gold. I also know, that were I even
The villain I am deemed, the service rendered
So recently would not permit you to
Pursue me to the death, except through shame,
Such as would leave your scutcheon but a blank.
But this is nothing : I demand of you
Justice upon your unjust servants, and
From your own lips a disavowal of
All sanction of their insolence : thus much
You owe to the unknown, who asks no more,
And never thought to have asked so much.

Stral. This tone
May be of innocence.

Gab. 'Sdeath ! who dare doubt it
Except such villains as ne'er had it ?

Stral. You
Are hot, sir.

Gab. Must I turn an icicle
Before the breath of menials, and their master?

Stral. Ulric! you know this man; I found him in
Your company.

Gab. We found *you* in the Oder;
Would we had left you there!

Stral. I give you thanks, sir.

Gab. I've earned them; but might have earned
more from others,
Perchance, if I had left you to your fate.

Stral. Ulric! you know this man?

Gab. No more than you do,
If he avouches not my honor.

Ulr. I
Can vouch your courage, and, as far as my
Own brief connection led me, honor.

Stral. Then
I'm satisfied.

Gab. (ironically). Right easily, methinks.
What is the spell in his asseveration
More than in mine?

Stral. I merely said that *I*
Was satisfied — not that you are absolved.

Gab. Again! Am I accused or no?

Stral. Go to!
You wax too insolent. If circumstance
And general suspicion be against you,
Is the fault mine? Is't not enough that I
Decline all question of your guilt or innocence?

Gab. My lord, my lord, this is mere cozenage.
A vile equivocation; you well know
Your doubts are certainties to all around you —
Your looks a voice — your frowns a sentence; you
Are practising your power on me — because
You have it; but beware! you know not whom
You strive to tread on.

Stral. Threat'st thou?

Gab. Not so much
As you accuse. You hint the basest injury,
And I retort it with an open warning.

Stral. As you have said, 't is true I owe you
something,
For which you seem disposed to pay yourself.

Gab. Not with your gold.

Stral. With bootless insolence.

[*To his Attendants and IDENSTEIN.*
You need not further to molest this man,
But let him go his way. Ulric, good morrow!

[*Exit STRALENHEIM, IDENSTEIN, and Attendants.*

Gab. (*following*). I'll after him and ——

Ulr. (*stopping him*). Not a step.

Gab. Who shall
Oppose me?

Ulr. Your own reason, with a moment's
Thought.

Gab. Must I bear this?

Ulr. Pshaw! we all must bear
The arrogance of something higher than
Ourselves — the highest cannot temper Satan,
Nor the lowest his vicegerents upon earth.

I've seen you brave the elements, and bear
Things which had made this silkworm cast his skin —
And shrink you from a few sharp sneers and words?

Gab. Must I bear to be deemed a thief? If
't were

A bandit of the woods, I could have borne it —
There's something daring in it; — but to steal
The moneys of a slumbering man! —

Ulr. It seems, then,

You are *not* guilty?

Gab. Do I hear aright?

You too!

Ulr. I merely asked a simple question.

Gab. If the judge asked me, I would answer
“No” —

To you I answer *thus*. (*He draws.*)

Ulr. (*drawing*). With all my heart!

Jos. Without there! Ho! help! help! — Oh,
God! here's murder!

[*Exit JOSEPHINE, shrieking.*

GABOR and ULRIC fight. GABOR is disarmed just
as STRALENHEIM, JOSEPHINE, IDENSTEIN, etc.
rëenter.

Jos. Oh! glorious heaven! He's safe!

Stral. (*to JOSEPHINE*). Who's safe?

Jos. My ———.

Ulr. (*interrupting her with a stern look, and turn-
ing afterwards to STRALENHEIM*). Both!

Here's no great harm done.

Stral. What hath caused all this?

Ulr. You, baron, I believe; but as the effect
Is harmless, let it not disturb you. — Gabor!
There is your sword; and when you bare it next,
Let it not be against your *friends*.

[ULRIC pronounces the last words slowly and
emphatically in a low voice to GABOR.]

Gab. I thank you
Less for my life than for your counsel.

Stral. These
Brawls must end here.

Gab. (*taking his sword*). They shall. You have
wronged me, Ulric,
More with your unkind thoughts than sword: I
would

The last were in my bosom rather than
The first in yours. I could have borne yon noble's
Absurd insinuations — ignorance
And dull suspicion are a part of his
Entail will last him longer than his lands. —
But I may fit *him* yet: — you have vanquished me.
I was the fool of passion to conceive
That I could cope with you, whom I had seen
Already proved by greater perils than
Rest in this arm. We may meet by and by,
However — but in friendship.

[*Exit* GABOR.]

Stral. I will brook
No more! This outrage following up his insults,
Perhaps his guilt, has cancelled all the little

I owed him heretofore for the so-vaunted
Aid which he added to your abler succor.

Ulric, you are not hurt? —

Ulr. Not even by a scratch.

Stral. (to IDENSTEIN). Intendant! take your
measures to secure

Yon fellow: I revoke my former lenity.

He shall be sent to Frankfort with an escort

The instant that the waters have abated.

Iden. Secure him! He hath got his sword
again —

And seems to know the use on't; 't is his trade,
Belike; — I'm a civilian.

Stral. Fool! are not

Yon score of vassals dogging at your heels

Enough to seize a dozen such? Hence! after him!

Ulr. Baron, I do beseech you!

Stral. I must be

Obedied. No words!

Iden. Well, if it must be so —

March, vassals! I'm your leader, and will bring

The rear up: a wise general never should

Expose his precious life — on which all rests.

I like that article of war.

[*Exit IDENSTEIN and Attendants.*]

Stral. Come hither,

Ulric: what does that woman here? Oh! now

I recognize her, 't is the stranger's wife

Whom they name "Werner."

Ulr. 'T is his name.

Stral. Indeed!
Is not your husband visible, fair dame? —

Jos. Who seeks him?

Stral. No one — for the present: but
I fain would parley, Ulric, with yourself
Alone.

Ulr. I will retire with you.

Jos. Not so:
You are the latest stranger, and command
All places here.
(*Aside to ULRIC, as she goes out.*) O Ulric! have a
care —

Remember what depends on a rash word!

Ulr. (to JOSEPHINE). Fear not! —
[*Exit* JOSEPHINE.]

Stral. Ulric, I think that I may trust you:
You saved my life — and acts like these beget
Unbounded confidence.

Ulr. Say on.

Stral. Mysterious
And long-engendered circumstances (not
To be now fully entered on) have made
This man obnoxious — perhaps fatal to me.

Ulr. Who? Gabor, the Hungarian?

Stral. No — this “Werner” —
With the false name and habit.

Ulr. How can this be?
He is the poorest of the poor — and yellow
Sickness sits caverned in his hollow eye:
The man is helpless.

Stral. He is — 't is no matter; —
But if he be the man I deem (and that
He is so, all around us here — and much
That is not here — confirm my apprehension)
He must be made secure ere twelve hours further.

Ulr. And what have I to do with this?

Stral. I have sent
To Frankfort, to the governor, my friend
(I have the authority to do so by
An order of the house of Brandenburg),
For a fit escort — but this cursed flood
Bars all access, and may do for some hours.

Ulr. It is abating.

Stral. That is well.

Ulr. But how
Am I concerned?

Stral. As one who did so much
For me, you cannot be indifferent to
That which is of more import to me than
The life you rescued. — Keep your eye on *him*!
The man avoids me, knows that I now know him. —
Watch him! — as you would watch the wild boar
when
He makes against you in the hunter's gap —
Like him he must be speared.

Ulr. Why so?

Stral. He stands
Between me and a brave inheritance!
Oh! could you see it! But you shall.

Ulr. I hope so.

Stral. It is the richest of the rich Bohemia,
Unscathed by scorching war. It lies so near
The strongest city, Prague, that fire and sword
Have skimmed it lightly: so that now, besides
Its own exuberance, it bears double value
Confronted with whole realms far and near
Made deserts.

Ulr. You describe it faithfully.

Stral. Ay — could you see it, you would say so —
but,

As I have said, you shall.

Ulr. I accept the omen.

Stral. Then claim a recompense from it and me,
Such as *both* may make worthy your acceptance
And services to me and mine for ever.

Ulr. And this sole, sick, and miserable wretch —
This way-worn stranger — stands between you and
This Paradise? — (As Adam did between
The devil and his) — [*Aside.*]

Stral. He doth.

Ulr. Hath he no right?

Stral. Right! none. A disinherited prodigal,
Who for these twenty years disgraced his lineage
In all his acts — but chiefly by his marriage,
And living amidst commerce-fetching burghers,
And dabbling merchants, in a mart of Jews.

Ulr. He has a wife, then?

Stral. You'd be sorry to
Call such your mother. You have seen the woman
He *calls* his wife.

Ulr. Is she not so?

Stral. No more

Than he's your father: — an Italian girl,
The daughter of a banished man, who lives
On love and poverty with this same Werner.

Ulr. They are childless, then?

Stral. There is or was a bastard,
Whom the old man — the grandsire (as old age
Is ever doting) took to warm his bosom,
As it went chilly downward to the grave:
But the imp stands not in my path — he has fled,
No one knows whither; and if he had not,
His claims alone were too contemptible
To stand. — Why do you smile?

Ulr. At your vain fears:
A poor man almost in his grasp — a child
Of doubtless birth — can startle a grandee!

Stral. All's to be feared, where all is to be gained.

Ulr. True; and aught done to save or to obtain it.

Stral. You have harped the very string next to
my heart.

I may depend upon you?

Ulr. 'T were too late
To doubt it.

Stral. Let no foolish pity shake
Your bosom (for the appearance of the man
Is pitiful) — he is a wretch, as likely
To have robbed me as the fellow more suspected,
Except that circumstance is less against him;
He being lodged far off, and in a chamber

Without approach to mine: and, to say truth,
I think too well of blood allied to mine,
To deem he would descend to such an act:
Besides, he was a soldier, and a brave one
Once — though too rash.

Ulr. And they, my lord, we know
By our experience, never plunder till
They knock the brains out first — which makes
 them heirs,
Not thieves. The dead, who feel nought, can lose
 nothing,
Nor e'er be robbed: their spoils are a bequest —
No more.

Stral. Go to! you are a wag. But say
I may be sure you'll keep an eye on this man,
And let me know his slightest movement towards
Concealment or escape?

Ulr. You may be sure
You yourself could not watch him more than I
Will be his sentinel.

Stral. By this you make me
Yours, and for ever.

Ulr. Such is my intention. [*Exeunt.*

A C T I I I.

SCENE I.

A Hall in the same Palace, from whence the secret Passage leads.

Enter WERNER and GABOR.

Gab. Sir, I have told my tale : if it so please you
To give me refuge for a few hours, well —
If not, I'll try my fortune elsewhere.

Wer. How
Can I, so wretched, give to Misery
A shelter? — wanting such myself as much
As e'er the hunted deer a covert —

Gab. Or
The wounded lion his cool cave. Methinks
You rather look like one would turn at bay,
And rip the hunter's entrails.

Wer. Ah!

Gab. I care not
If it be so, being much disposed to do
The same myself. But will you shelter me?
I am oppressed like you — and poor like you —
Disgraced —

Wer. (abruptly). Who told you that I was disgraced?

Gab. No one; nor did I say *you* were so: with
Your poverty my likeness ended; but

I said *I* was so — and would add, with truth,
As undeservedly as *you*.

Wer. Again!

As *I*?

Gab. Or any other honest man.
What the devil would you have? You don't believe me
Guilty of this base theft?

Wer. No, no — I cannot.

Gab. Why that's my heart of honor! yon young gallant —

Your miserly intendant and dense noble —
All — all suspected me; and why? because
I am the worst-clothed, and least named amongst them;

Although, were Momus' lattice in your breasts,
My soul might brook to open it more widely
Than theirs: but thus it is — you poor and helpless —
Both still more than myself.

Wer. How know you that?

Gab. You're right: I ask for shelter at the hand
Which I call helpless; if you now deny it,
I were well paid. But you, who seem to have proved

The wholesome bitterness of life, know well,
By sympathy, that all the outspread gold
Of the New World the Spaniard boasts about
Could never tempt the man who knows its worth,
Weighed at its proper value in the balance,
Save in such guise (and there I grant its power,

Because I feel it,) as may leave no nightmare
Upon his heart o' nights.

Wer. What do you mean?

Gab. Just what I say; I thought my speech was
plain:

You are no thief — nor I — and, as true men,
Should aid each other.

Wer. It is a damned world, sir.

Gab. So is the nearest of the two next, as
The priests say (and no doubt they should know
best),

Therefore I'll stick by this — as being loth
To suffer martyrdom, at least with such
An epitaph as larceny upon my tomb.
It is but a night's lodging which I crave;
To-morrow I will try the waters, as
The dove did, trusting that they have abated.

Wer. Abated? Is there hope of that?

Gab. There was
At noontide.

Wer. Then we may be safe.

Gab. Are you
In peril?

Wer. Poverty is ever so.

Gab. That I know by long practice. Will you
not
Promise to make mine less?

Wer. Your poverty?

Gab. No — you do n't look a leech for that dis-
order;

I meant my peril only : you've a roof,
And I have none ; I merely seek a covert.

Wer. Rightly ; for how should such a wretch as I
Have gold ?

Gab. Scarce honestly, to say the truth on't,
Although I almost wish you had the baron's.

Wer. Dare you insinuate ?

Gab. What ?

Wer. Are you aware
To whom you speak ?

Gab. No ; and I am not used
Greatly to care. (*A noise heard without*). But
hark ! they come !

Wer. Who come ?

Gab. The intendant and his man-hounds after me :
I'd face them — but it were in vain to expect
Justice at hands like theirs. Where shall I go ?
But show me any place. I do assure you,
If there be faith in man, I am most guiltless :
Think if it were your own case !

Wer. (*Aside.*) Oh, just God !
Thy hell is not hereafter ! Am I dust still ?

Gab. I see you're moved ; and it shows well
in you :
I may live to requite it.

Wer. Are you not
A spy of Stralenheim's ?

Gab. Not I ! and if
I were, what is there to espy in you ?
Although I recollect his frequent question

About you and your spouse might lead to some
Suspicion ; but you best know — what — and why
I am his deadliest foe.

Wer. You ?

Gab. After such
A treatment for the service which in part
I rendered him, I am his enemy :
If you are not his friend, you will assist me.

Wer. I will.

Gab. But how ?

Wer. (*showing the panel*). There is a secret spring.
Remember, I discovered it by chance,
And used it but for safety.

Gab. Open it,
And I will use it for the same.

Wer. I found it,
As I have said : it leads through winding walls,
(So thick as to bear paths within their ribs,
Yet lose no jot of strength or stateliness,)
And hollow cells, and obscure niches, to
I know not whither ; you must not advance :
Give me your word.

Gab. It is unnecessary :
How should I make my way in darkness through
A Gothic labyrinth of unknown windings ?

Wer. Yes, but who knows to what place it may
lead ?

I know not — (mark you !) — but who knows it
might not

Lead even into the chamber of your foe ?

So strangely were contrived these galleries
By our Teutonic fathers in old days,
When man built less against the elements
Than his next neighbor. You must not advance
Beyond the two first windings; if you do
(Albeit I never passed them), I'll not answer
For what you may be led to.

Gab.

But I will.

A thousand thanks!

Wer. You'll find the spring more obvious
On the other side; and, when you would return,
It yields to the least touch.

Gab.

I'll in — farewell!

[GABOR goes in by the secret panel.]

Wer. (solus). What have I done? Alas! what *had*
I done

Before to make this fearful? Let it be
Still some atonement that I save the man,
Whose sacrifice had saved perhaps my own —
They come! to seek elsewhere what is before them!

Enter IDENSTEIN and Others.

Iden. Is he not here? He must have vanished
then

Through the dim Gothic glass by pious aid
Of pictured saints upon the red and yellow
Casements, through which the sunset streams like
sunrise

On long pearl-colored beards and crimson crosses,
And gilded crosiers, and crossed arms, and cowls,

And helms, and twisted armor, and long swords,
All the fantastic furniture of windows
Dim with brave knights and holy hermits, whose
Likeness and fame alike rest in some panes
Of crystal, which each rattling wind proclaims
As frail as any other life or glory.
He's gone, however.

Wer. Whom do you seek?

Iden. A villain.

Wer. Why need you come so far, then?

Iden. In the search

Of him who robbed the baron.

Wer. Are you sure
You have divined the man?

Iden. As sure as you
Stand there: but where's he gone?

Wer. Who?

Iden. He we sought.

Wer. You see he is not here.

Iden. And yet we traced him
Up to this hall. Are you accomplices?
Or deal you in the black art?

Wer. I deal plainly,
To many men the blackest.

Iden. It may be
I have a question or two for yourself
Hereafter; but we must continue now
Our search for t' other.

Wer. You had best begin
Your inquisition now: I may not be
So patient always.

Iden. I should like to know,
In good sooth, if you really are the man
That Stralenheim's in quest of.

Wer. Insolent!
Said you not that he was not here?

Iden. Yes, one;
But there's another whom he tracks more keenly,
And soon, it may be, with authority
Both paramount to his and mine. But, come!
Bustle, my boys! we are at fault.

[*Exit IDENSTEIN and Attendants.*]

Wer. In what
A maze hath my dim destiny involved me!
And one base sin hath done me less ill than
The leaving undone one far greater. Down,
Thou busy devil, rising in my heart!
Thou art too late! I'll nought to do with blood.

Enter ULRIC.

Ulr. I sought you, father.

Wer. Is't not dangerous?

Ulr. No; Stralenheim is ignorant of all
Or any of the ties between us: more —
He sends me here a spy upon your actions,
Deeming me wholly his.

Wer. I cannot think it:
'Tis but a snare he winds about us both,
To swoop the sire and son at once.

Ulr. I cannot
Pause in each petty fear, and stumble at

The doubts that rise like briers in our path,
But must break through them, as an unarmed carle
Would, though with naked limbs, were the wolf
rustling

In the same thicket where he hewed for bread.
Nets are for thrushes, eagles are not caught so:
We'll overfly or rend them.

Wer. Show me *how*?

Ulr. Can you not guess?

Wer. I cannot.

Ulr. That is strange.

Came the thought ne'er into your mind *last night*?

Wer. I understand you not.

Ulr. Then we shall never
More understand each other. But to change
The topic ——

Wer. You mean to *pursue* it, as
'Tis of our safety.

Ulr. Right; I stand corrected.
I see the subject now more clearly, and
Our general situation in its bearings.
The waters are abating; a few hours [fort,
Will bring his summoned myrmidons from Frank-
When you will be a prisoner, perhaps worse,
And I an outcast, bastardized by practice
Of this same baron to make way for him.

Wer. And now your remedy! I thought to escape
By means of this accursed gold; but now
I dare not use it, show it, scarce look on it.
Methinks it wears upon its face my guilt

For motto, not the mintage of the state ;
And for the sovereign's head, my own begirt
With hissing snakes, which curl around my temples,
And cry to all beholders, Lo ! a villain !

Ulr. You must not use it, at least now ; but take
This ring. *[He gives WERNER a jewel.]*

Wer. A gem ! It was my father's !

Ulr. And
As such is now your own. With this you must
Bribe the intendant for his old caleche
And horses to pursue your route at sunrise,
Together with my mother.

Wer. And leave you,
So lately found, in peril too ?

Ulr. Fear nothing !
'The only fear were if we fled together,
For that would make our ties beyond all doubt.
The waters only lie in flood between
This burgh and Frankfort ; so far's in our favor.
The route on to Bohemia, though encumbered,
Is not impassable ; and when you gain
A few hours' start, the difficulties will be
The same to your pursuers. Once beyond
The frontier, and you're safe.

Wer. My noble boy !

Ulr. Hush ! hush ! no transports : we'll indulge
in them

In Castle Siegendorf ! Display no gold :
Show Idenstein the gem (I know the man,
And have looked through him) : it will answer thus

A double purpose. Stralenheim lost *gold* —
No jewel: therefore it could *not* be his,
And then the man who was possest of this
Can hardly be suspected of abstracting
The baron's coin, when he could thus convert
This ring to more than Stralenheim has lost
By his last night's slumber. Be not over timid
In your address, nor yet too arrogant,
And Idenstein will serve you.

Wer. I will follow
In all things your direction.

Ulr. I would have
Spared you the trouble; but had I appeared
To take an interest in you, and still more
By dabbling with a jewel in your favor,
All had been known at once.

Wer. My guardian angel!
This overpays the past. But how wilt thou
Fare in our absence?

Ulr. Stralenheim knows nothing
Of me as aught of kindred with yourself.
I will but wait a day or two with him
To lull all doubts, and then rejoin my father.

Wer. To part no more!

Ulr. I know not that; but at
The least we'll meet again once more.

Wer. My boy!
My friend! my only child, and sole preserver!
Oh, do not hate me!

Ulr. Hate my father!

Wer. Ay,
My father hated me. Why not my son?

Ulr. Your father knew you not as I do.

Wer. Scorpions
Are in thy words! Thou know me? in this guise
Thou canst not know me, I am not myself;
Yet (hate me not) I will be soon.

Ulr. I'll wait!
In the mean time be sure that all a son
Can do for parents shall be done for mine.

Wer. I see it, and I feel it; yet I feel
Further — that you despise me.

Ulr. Wherefore should I?

Wer. Must I repeat my humiliation?

Ulr. No!
I have fathomed it and you. But let us talk
Of this no more. Or, if it must be ever,
Not *now*. Your error has redoubled all
The present difficulties of our house,
At secret war with that of Stralenheim:
All we have now to think of is to baffle
HIM. I have shown *one* way.

Wer. The only one,
And I embrace it, as I did my son,
Who showed *himself* and father's *safety* in
One day.

Ulr. You *shall* be safe; let that suffice.
Would Stralenheim's appearance in Bohemia
Disturb your right, or mine, if once we were
Admitted to our lands?

Wer. Assuredly,

Situate as we are now, although the first
Possesser might, as usual, prove the strongest,
Especially the next in blood.

Ulr. *Blood!* 't is
A word of many meanings ; in the veins,
And out of them, it is a different thing —
And so it should be, when the same in blood
(As it is called) are aliens to each other,
Like Theban brethren : when a part is bad,
A few spilt ounces purify the rest.

Wer. I do not apprehend you.

Ulr. That may be —
And should, perhaps — and yet ——— but get ye
ready ;

You and my mother must away to-night.
Here comes the intendant : sound him with the gem ;
'T will sink into his venal soul like lead
Into the deep, and bring up slime and mud,
And ooze too, from the bottom, as the lead doth
With its greased understratum ; but no less
Will serve to warn our vessels through these shoals.
The freight is rich, so heave the line in time !
Farewell ! I scarce have time, but yet your *hand*,
My father ! ———

Wer. Let me embrace thee !

Ulr. We may be
Observed : subdue your nature to the hour !
Keep off from me as from your foe !

Wer. Accursed
Be he who is the stifling cause which smothers

The best and sweetest feeling of our hearts ;
At such an hour too !

Ulr. Yes, curse — it will ease you !
Here is the intendant.

Enter IDENSTEIN.

Master Idenstein,
How fare you in your purpose ? Have you caught
The rogue ?

Iden. No, faith !

Ulr. Well, there are plenty more :
You may have better luck another chase.
Where is the baron ?

Iden. Gone back to his chamber :
And now I think on 't, asking after you
With nobly-born impatience.

Ulr. Your great men
Must be answered on the instant, as the bound
Of the stung steed replies unto the spur :
'Tis well they have horses, too ; for if they had not,
I fear that men must draw their chariots, as
They say kings did Sesostris.

Iden. Who was he ?

Ulr. An old Bohemian — an imperial gipsy.

Iden. A gipsy or Bohemian, 't is the same,
For they pass by both names. And was he one ?

Ulr. I've heard so ; but I must take leave. In-
tendant,
Your servant ! — Werner (*to WERNER slightly*), if
that be your name,

Yours.

[*Exit ULRIC.*

Iden. A well-spoken, pretty-faced young man!
And prettily behaved! He knows his station,
You see, sir: how he gave to each his due
Precedence!

Wer. I perceived it, and applaud
His just discernment and your own.

Iden. That's well —
That's very well. You also know your place, too;
And yet I don't know that I know your place.

Wer. (*showing the ring*). Would this assist your
knowledge?

Iden. How! — What! — Eh!
A jewel!

Wer. 'Tis your own on one condition.

Iden. Mine! — Name it!

Wer. That hereafter you permit me
At thrice its value to redeem it: 'tis
A family ring.

Iden. A family! — *yours!* — a gem!
I'm breathless!

Wer. You must also furnish me
An hour ere daybreak with all means to quit
This place.

Iden. But is it real? Let me look on it:
Diamond, by all that's glorious!

Wer. Come, I'll trust you:
You have guessed, no doubt, that I was born above
My present seeming.

Iden. I can't say I did,
Though this looks like it: this is the true breeding
Of gentle blood!

Wer. I have important reasons
For wishing to continue privily
My journey hence.

Iden. So then *you are* the man
Whom Stralenheim's in quest of?

Wer. I am not;
But being taken for him might conduct
So much embarrassment to me just now,
And to the baron's self hereafter — 't is
To spare both that I would avoid all bustle.

Iden. Be you the man or no, 't is not my business;
Besides, I never should obtain the half
From this proud, niggardly noble, who would raise
The country for some missing bits of coin,
And never offer a precise reward —
But *this!* — another look!

Wer. Gaze on it freely;
At day-dawn it is yours.

Iden. Oh, thou sweet sparkler!
Thou more than stone of the philosopher!
Thou touchstone of Philosophy herself!
Thou bright eye of the Mine! thou loadstar of
The soul! the true magnetic Pole to which
All hearts point duly north, like trembling needles!
Thou flaming Spirit of the Earth! which, sitting
High on the monarch's diadem, attractest
More worship than the majesty who sweats
Beneath the crown which makes his head ache, like
Millions of hearts which bleed to lend it lustre!
Shalt thou be mine? I am, methinks, already

A little king, a lucky alchymist! —
A wise magician, who has bound the devil
Without the forfeit of his soul. But come,
Werner, or what else?

Wer. Call me Werner still;
You may yet know me by a loftier title.

Iden. I do believe in thee! thou art the spirit
Of whom I long have dreamed in a low garb. —
But come, I'll serve thee; thou shalt be as free
As air, despite the waters; let us hence:
I'll show thee I am honest — (oh, thou jewel!)
Thou shalt be furnish'd, Werner, with such means
Of flight, that if thou wert a snail, not birds
Should overtake thee. — Let me gaze again!
I have a foster-brother in the mart
Of Hamburgh skilled in precious stones. How many
Carats may it weigh? — Come, Werner, I will wing
thee. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

STRALENHEIM's Chamber.

STRALENHEIM and FRITZ.

Fritz. All's ready, my good lord!

Stral. I am not sleepy,
And yet I must to bed; I fain would say
To rest, but something heavy on my spirit,
Too dull for wakefulness, too quick for slumber,
Sits on me as a cloud along the sky,

Which will not let the sunbeams through, nor yet
Descend in rain and end, but spreads itself
'Twixt earth and heaven, like envy between man
And man, an everlasting mist; — I will
Unto my pillow.

Fritz. May you rest there well!

Stral. I feel, and fear, I shall.

Fritz. And wherefore fear?

Stral. I know not why, and therefore do fear more,
Because an undescribable —— but 't is
All folly. Were the locks (as I desired)
Changed, to-day, of this chamber? for last night's
Adventure makes it needful.

Fritz. Certainly,
According to your order, and beneath
The inspection of myself and the young Saxon
Who saved your life. I think they call him "Ulric."

Stral. You *think*! you supercilious slave! what
right

Have you to *tax your* memory, which should be
Quick, proud, and happy to retain the *name*
Of him who saved your master, as a litany
Whose daily repetition marks your duty. —
Get hence! "*You think*," indeed! you who stood
still

Howling and dripping on the bank, whilst I
Lay dying, and the stranger dashed aside
The roaring torrent, and restored me to
Thank him — and despise you. "*You think*!" and
scarce

Can recollect his name! I will not waste
More words on you. Call me betimes.

Fritz.

Good night!

I trust to-morrow will restore your lordship
To renovated strength and temper.

[*The scene closes.*]

SCENE III.

The secret Passage.

Gab. (solus).

Four —

Five — six hours have I counted, like the guard
Of outposts on the never-merry clock:
That hollow tongue of time, which, even when
It sounds for joy, takes something from enjoyment
With every clang. 'T is a perpetual knell,
Though for a marriage-feast it rings: each stroke
Peals for a hope the less; the funeral note
Of Love deep-buried without resurrection
In the grave of Possession; while the knoll
Of long-lived parents finds a jovial echo
To triple Time in the son's ear.

I'm cold —

I'm dark; — I've blown my fingers — numbered o'er
And o'er my steps — and knocked my head against
Some fifty buttresses — and roused the rats
And bats in general insurrection, till
Their cursed pattering feet and whirling wings
Leave me scarce hearing for another sound.
A light! It is at distance (if I can

Measure in darkness distance) : but it blinks
As through a crevice or a key-hole, in
The inhibited direction : I must on,
Nevertheless, from curiosity.
A distant lamp-light is an incident
In such a den as this. Pray Heaven it lead me
To nothing that may tempt me ! Else — Heaven
aid me

To obtain or to escape it ! Shining still !
Were it the star of Lucifer himself,
Or he himself girt with its beams, I could
Contain no longer. Softly ! mighty well !
That corner's turned — so — ah ! no ; — right ! it
draws

Nearer. Here is a darksome angle — so,
That's weathered. — Let me pause. — Suppose it
leads

Into some greater danger than that which
I have escaped — no matter, 't is a new one ;
And novel perils, like fresh mistresses,
Wear more magnetic aspects : — I will on,
And be it where it may — I have my dagger,
Which may protect me at a pinch. — Burn still,
Thou little light ! Thou art my *ignis fatuus* !
My stationary Will-o'-the-wisp ! — So ! so !
He hears my invocation, and fails not.

[*The scene closes.*

SCENE IV.

*A Garden.**Enter WERNER.*

I could not sleep — and now the hour's at hand ;
All's ready. Idenstein has kept his word ;
And stationed in the outskirts of the town,
Upon the forest's edge, the vehicle
Awaits us. Now the dwindling stars begin
To pale in heaven ; and for the last time I
Look on these horrible walls. Oh ! never, never
Shall I forget them. Here I came most poor,
But not dishonored : and I leave them with
A stain, — if not upon my name, yet in
My heart ! — a never-dying canker worm,
Which all the coming splendor of the lands,
And rights, and sovereignty of Siegendorf
Can scarcely lull a moment. I must find
Some means of restitution, which would ease
My soul in part ; but how without discovery ? —
It must be done, however ; and I'll pause
Upon the method the first hour of safety.
The madness of my misery led to this
Base infamy ; repentance must retrieve it :
I will have nought of Stralenheim's upon
My spirit, though he would grasp all of mine ;
Lands, freedom, life, — and yet he sleeps ! as
soundly,

Perhaps, as infancy, with gorgeous curtains
Spread for his canopy, o'er silken pillows,
Such as when —— Hark! what noise is that?

Again!

The branches shake; and some loose stones have
fallen

From yonder terrace.

[ULRIC *leaps down from the terrace.*

Ulric! ever welcome!

Thrice welcome now! this filial ——

Ulr.

Stop! Before

We approach, tell me ——

Wer.

Why look you so?

Ulr.

Do I

Behold my father, or ——

Wer.

What?

Ulr.

An assassin?

Wer. Insane or insolent!

Ulr.

Reply, sir, as

You prize your life, or mine!

Wer.

To what must I

Answer?

Ulr.

Are you or are you not the assassin
Of Stralenheim?

Wer.

I never was as yet

The murderer of any man. What mean you?

Ulr.

Did not you *this* night (as the night before)
Retrace the secret passage? Did you not
Again revisit Stralenheim's chamber? and ——

[ULRIC *pauses.*

Wer. Proceed.

Ulr. Died he not by your hand?

Wer. Great God!

Ulr. You are innocent, then! my father's innocent!

Embrace me! Yes, — your tone — your look —
yes, yes, —

Yet say so.

Wer. If I e'er, in heart or mind,
Conceived deliberately such a thought,
But rather strove to trample back to hell
Such thoughts — if e'er they glared a moment
through

The irritation of my oppressed spirit —
May heaven be shut forever from my hopes
As from mine eyes!

Ulr. But Stralenheim is dead.

Wer. 'Tis horrible! 'tis hideous, as 'tis hateful! —

But what have I to do with this?

Ulr. No bolt
Is forced; no violence can be detected,
Save on his body. Part of his own household
Have been alarmed; but as the intendant is
Absent, I took upon myself the care
Of mustering the police. His chamber has,
Past doubt, been entered secretly. Excuse me,
If nature ——

Wer. Oh, my boy! what unknown woes
Of dark fatality, like clouds, are gathering
Above our house!

Ulr. My father! I acquit you!
But will the world do so? will even the judge,
If —— But you must away this instant.

Wer. No!
I' ll face it. Who shall dare suspect me?

Ulr. Yet
You had *no* guests — *no* visitors — no life
Breathing around you, save my mother's?

Wer. Ah!
The Hungarian!

Ulr. He is gone! he disappeared
Ere sunset.

Wer. No; I hid him in that very
Concealed and fatal gallery.

Ulr. *There* I' ll find him.
[ULRIC is going.]

Wer. It is too late: he had left the palace ere
I quitted it. I found the secret panel
Open, and the doors which lead from that hall
Which masks it: I but thought he had snatched the
silent

And favorable moment to escape
The myrmidons of Idenstein, who were
Dogging him yester-even.

Ulr. You reclosed
The panel?

Wer. Yes; and not without reproach
(And inner trembling for the avoided peril)
At his dull heedlessness, in leaving thus
His shelterer's asylum to the risk
Of a discovery.

Ulr. You are sure you closed it?

Wer. Certain.

Ulr. That's well; but had been better, if
You ne'er had turned it to a den for —— [*He pauses.*

Wer. Thieves!

Thou wouldst say: I must bear it and deserve it;
But not ——

Ulr. No, father; do not speak of this:
This is no hour to think of petty crimes,
But to prevent the consequence of great ones.
Why would you shelter this man?

Wer. Could I shun it?
A man pursued by my chief foe; disgraced
For my own crime; a victim to *my* safety,
Imploring a few hours' concealment from
The very wretch who was the cause he needed
Such refuge. Had he been a wolf, I could not
Have in such circumstances thrust him forth.

Ulr. And like the wolf he hath repaid you. But
It is too late to ponder thus: — you must
Set out ere dawn. I will remain here to
Trace the murderer, if 't is possible. [*Moloch*

Wer. But this my sudden flight will give the
Suspicion: two new victims in the lieu
Of one, if I remain. The fled Hungarian,
Who seems the culprit, and ——

Ulr. Who seems? Who else
Can be so?

Wer. Not *I*, though just now you doubted —
You, my son! — doubted ——

Ulr. And do you doubt of him
The fugitive?

Wer. Boy! since I fell into
The abyss of crime (though not of *such* crime), I,
Having seen the innocent oppressed for me,
May doubt even of the guilty's guilt. Your heart
Is free, and quick with virtuous wrath to accuse
Appearances; and views a criminal
In Innocence's shadow, it may be,
Because 't is dusky.

Ulr. And if I do so,
What will mankind, who know you not, or knew
But to oppress? You must not stand the hazard.
Away! — I'll make all easy. Idenstein
Will for his own sake and his jewel's hold
His peace — he also is a partner in
Your flight — moreover —

Wer. Fly! and leave my name
Linked with the Hungarian's, or preferred as
poorest,
To bear the brand of bloodshed?

Ulr. Pshaw! leave any thing
Except our father's sovereignty and castles,
For which you have so long panted and in vain!
What *name*? You have *no name*, since that you bear
Is feigned.

Wer. Most true; but still I would not have it
Engraved in crimson in men's memories,
Though in this most obscure abode of men —
Besides, the search —

Ulr. I will provide against
Aught that can touch you. No one knows you here
As heir of Siegendorf: if Idenstein
Suspects, 't is *but suspicion*, and he is
A fool: his folly shall have such employment,
Too, that the unknown Werner shall give way
To nearer thoughts of self. The laws (if e'er
Laws reached this village) are all in abeyance
With the late general war of thirty years,
Or crushed, or rising slowly from the dust,
To which the march of armies trampled them.
Stralenheim, although noble, is unheeded
Here, save as *such* — without lands, influence,
Save what hath perished with him. Few prolong
A week beyond their funeral rites their sway
O'er men, unless by relatives, whose interest
Is roused: such is not here the case; he died
Alone, unknown, — a solitary grave,
Obscure as his deserts, without a scutcheon,
Is all he 'll have, or wants. If *I* discover
The assassin, 't will be well — if not, believe me
None else; though all the full-fed train of menials
May howl above his ashes (as they did
Around him in his danger on the Oder),
Will no more stir a finger *now* than *then*.
Hence! hence! I must not hear your answer. —

Look!

The stars are almost faded, and the grey
Begins to grizzle the black hair of night.
You shall not answer: — Pardon me that I

Am peremptory ; 't is your son that speaks,
Your long-lost, late-found son. — Let's call my
mother !

Softly and swiftly step, and leave the rest
To me : I'll answer for the event as far
As regards *you*, and that is the chief point,
As my first duty, which shall be observed.
We'll meet in Castle Siegendorf — once more
Our banners shall be glorious ! Think of that
Alone, and leave all other thoughts to me,
Whose youth may better battle with them. — Hence !
And may your age be happy ! — I will kiss
My mother once more, then Heaven's speed be with
you !

Wer. This counsel's safe — but is it honorable ?

Ulr. To save a father is a child's chief honor.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

*A Gothic Hall in the Castle of Siegendorf, near
Prague.*

Enter ERIC and HENRICK, Retainers of the Count.

Eric. So better times are come at last ; to these
Old walls new masters and high wassail — both
A long desideratum.

Hen. Yes, for *masters*,
It might be unto those who long for novelty,

Though made by a new grave: but as for wassail,
Methinks the old Count Siegendorf maintained
His feudal hospitality as high
As e'er another prince of the empire.

Eric. Why,
For the mere cup and trencher, we no doubt
Fared passing well; but as for merriment
And sport, without which salt and sauces season
The cheer but scantily, our sizings were
Even of the narrowest.

Hen. The old count loved not
The roar of revel; are you sure that *this* does?

Eric. As yet he hath been courteous as he's
bounteous,
And we all love him.

Hen. His reign is as yet
Hardly a year o'erpast its honey-moon,
And the first year of sovereigns is bridal:
Anon, we shall perceive his real sway
And moods of mind.

Eric. Pray Heaven he keep the present!
Then his brave son, Count Ulric — there's a knight.
Pity the wars are o'er!

Hen. Why so?

Eric. Look on him!
And answer that yourself.

Hen. He's very youthful,
And strong and beautiful as a young tiger.

Eric. That's not a faithful vassal's likeness.

Hen. But
Perhaps a true one.

Eric. Pity, as I said,
The wars are over: in the hall, who like
Count Ulric for a well-supported pride,
Which awes, but yet offends not? in the field,
Who like him with his spear in hand, when, gnashing
His tusks, and ripping up from right to left
The howling hounds, the boar makes for the thicket?
Who backs a horse, or bears a hawk, or wears
A sword like him? Whose plume nods knightlier?

Hen. No one's, I grant you. Do not fear, if war
Be long in coming, he is of that kind
Will make it for himself, if he hath not
Already done as much.

Eric. What do you mean?

Hen. You can't deny his train of followers
(But few our native fellow vassals born
On the domain) are such a sort of knaves
As —— (*Pauses.*)

Eric. What?

Hen. The war (you love so much) leaves living.
Like other parents, she spoils her worst children.

Eric. Nonsense! they are all brave iron-visaged
fellows,
Such as old Tilly loved.

Hen. And who loved Tilly?
Ask that at Magdebourg — or for that matter
Wallenstein either; — they are gone to ——

Eric. Rest;
But what beyond 't is not ours to pronounce.

Hen. I wish they had left us something of their
rest:

The country (nominally now at peace)
Is over-run with — God knows who: they fly
By night, and disappear with sunrise; but
Leave us no less desolation, nay, even more,
Than the most *open* warfare.

Eric. But Count Ulric —
What has all this to do with him?

Hen. With *him*!
He —— might prevent it. As you say he's fond
Of war, why makes he it not on those marauders?

Eric. You'd better ask himself.

Hen. I would as soon
Ask the lion why he laps not milk.

Eric. And here he comes!

Hen. The devil! you'll hold your tongue?

Eric. Why do you turn so pale?

Hen. 'Tis nothing — but
Be silent.

Eric. I will, upon what you have said.

Hen. I assure you I meant nothing, — a mere sport
Of words, no more; besides, had it been otherwise.
He is to espouse the gentle Baroness
Ida of Stralenheim, the late baron's heiress;
And she, no doubt, will soften whatsoever
Of fierceness the late long intestine wars
Hath given all natures, and most unto those
Who were born in them, and bred up upon
The knees of Homicide; sprinkled, as it were,
With blood even at their baptism. Prithee, peace
On all that I have said!

Enter ULRIC and RODOLPH.

Good morrow, count.

Ulr. Good morrow, worthy Henrick. Eric, is
All ready for the chase?

Eric. The dogs are ordered
Down to the forest, and the vassals out
To beat the bushes, and the day looks promising.
Shall I call forth your excellency's suite?
What courser will you please to mount?

Ulr. The dun,
Walstein.

Eric. I fear he scarcely has recovered
The toils of Monday: 't was a noble chase:
You speared *four* with your own hand.

Ulr. True, good Eric;
I had forgotten — let it be the grey, then,
Old Ziska: he has not been out this fortnight.

Eric. He shall be straight caparisoned. How
many
Of your immediate retainers shall
Escort you?

Ulr. I leave that to Weilburgh, our
Master of the horse. [*Exit ERIC.*

Rodolph!

Rod. My lord!

Ulr. The news
Is awkward from the — (*RODOLPH points to HEN-*
RICK.)

How now, Henrick? why
Loiter you here?

Hen. For your commands, my lord.

Ulr. Go to my father, and present my duty,
And learn if he would aught with me before
I mount. [*Exit* HENRICK.

Rodolph, our friends have had a check
Upon the frontiers of Franconia, and
'Tis rumored that the column sent against them
Is to be strengthened. I must join them soon.

Rod. Best wait for further and more sure advices.

Ulr. I mean it — and indeed it could not well
Have fallen out at a time more opposite
To all my plans.

Rod. It will be difficult
To excuse your absence to the count your father.

Ulr. Yes, but the unsettled state of our domain
In high Silesia will permit and cover
My journey. In the mean time, when we are
Engaged in the chase, draw off the eighty men
Whom Wolffe leads — keep the forests on your
route :

You know it well?

Rod. As well as on that night
When we ——

Ulr. We will not speak of that until
We can repeat the same with like success :
And when you have joined, give Rosenberg this
letter. [*Gives a letter.*

Add further, that I have sent this slight addition
To our force with you and Wolffe, as herald of
My coming, though I could but spare them ill

At this time, as my father loves to keep
Full numbers of retainers round the castle,
Until this marriage, and its feasts and fooleries,
Are rung out with its peal of nuptial nonsense.

Rod. I thought you loved the lady Ida?

Ulr.

Why,

I do so — but it follows not from that
I would bind in my youth and glorious years,
So brief and burning, with a lady's zone,
Although 't were that of Venus; — but I love her.
As woman should be loved, fairly and solely.

Rod. And constantly?

Ulr.

I think so; for I love
Nought else. — But I have not the time to pause
Upon these gewgaws of the heart. Great things
We have to do ere long. Speed! speed! good
Rodolph!

Rod. On my return, however, I shall find
The Baroness Ida lost in Countess Siegendorf?

Ulr. Perhaps my father wishes it; and sooth
'T is no bad policy: this union with
The last bud of the rival branch at once
Unites the future and destroys the past.

Rod. Adieu.

Ulr. Yet hold — we had better keep together
Until the chase begins; then draw thou off,
And do as I have said.

Rod. I will. But to
Return — 't was a most kind act in the count
Your father to send up to Königsberg

For this fair orphan of the baron, and
To hail her as his daughter.

Ulr. Wondrous kind !
Especially as little kindness till
Then grew between them.

Rod. The late baron died
Of a fever, did he not?

Ulr. How should I know ?

Rod. I have heard it whispered there was some-
thing strange
About his death — and even the place of it
Is scarcely known.

Ulr. Some obscure village on
The Saxon or Silesian frontier.

Rod. He
Has left no testament — no farewell words ?

Ulr. I am neither confessor nor notary,
So cannot say.

Rod. Ah ! here's the lady Ida.

Enter IDA STRALENHEIM.*

Ulr. You are early, my sweet cousin !

Ida. Not *too* early,
Dear Ulric, if I do not interrupt you.
Why do you call me "*cousin* ?"

* [Ida, the *new* personage, is a precocious girl of fifteen, in a great hurry to be married; and who has very little to do in the business of the play, but to produce an effect by fainting at the discovery of the villany of her beloved, and partially touching on it in a previous scene. — ECL. REV.]

Ulr. (smiling). Are we not so?

Ida. Yes, but I do not like the name; methinks
It sounds so cold, as if you thought upon
Our pedigree, and only weighed our blood.

Ulr. (starting). Blood!

Ida. Why does yours start from your cheeks?

Ulr. Ay! doth it?

Ida. It doth — but no! it rushes like a torrent
Even to your brow again.

Ulr. (recovering himself). And if it fled,
It only was because your presence sent it
Back to my heart, which beats for you, sweet cousin!

Ida. "Cousin" again.

Ulr. Nay, then I'll call you sister.

Ida. I like that name still worse. — Would we
had ne'er
Been aught of kindred!

Ulr. (gloomily). Would we never had!

Ida. Oh heavens! and can *you wish that*?

Ulr. Dearest *Ida*!
Did I not echo your own wish?

Ida. Yes, *Ulric*,
But then I wished it not with such a glance,
And scarce knew what I said; but let me be
Sister, or cousin, what you will, so that
I still to you am something.

Ulr. You shall be
All — all ——

Ida. And you to *me* are so already;
But I can wait.

Ulr. Dear Ida!

Ida. Call me Ida,
Your Ida, for I would be yours, none else's —
Indeed I have none else left, since my poor father —
[*She pauses.*

Ulr. You have *mine* — you have *me*.

Ida. Dear Ulric, how I wish
My father could but view my happiness,
Which wants but this!

Ulr. Indeed!

Ida. You would have loved him,
He you; for the brave ever love each other:
His manner was a little cold, his spirit
Proud (as is birth's prerogative); but under
This grave exterior — Would you had known each
other!

Had such as you been near him on his journey,
He had not died without a friend to soothe
His last and lonely moments.

Ulr. Who says *that*?

Ida. What?

Ulr. That he *died alone*.

Ida. The general rumor,
And disappearance of his servants, who
Have ne'er returned: that fever was most deadly
Which swept them all away.

Ulr. If they were near him,
He could not die neglected or alone.

Ida. Alas! what is a menial to a deathbed,
When the dim eye rolls vainly round for what
It loves? — They say he died of a fever.

Ulr.

Say!

It *was* so.

Ida. I sometimes dream otherwise.

Ulr. All dreams are false.

Ida. And yet I see him as
I see you.

Ulr. Where?

Ida. In sleep — I see him lie
Pale, bleeding, and a man with a raised knife
Beside him.

Ulr. But you do not see his *face*?

Ida (*looking at him*). No! Oh, my God! do *you*?

Ulr. Why do you ask?

Ida. Because you look as if you saw a murderer!

Ulr. (*agitatedly*). *Ida*, this is mere childishness;
your weakness

Infects me, to my shame; but as all feelings

Of yours are common to me, it affects me.

Prithee, sweet child, change —

Ida. Child, indeed! I have
Full fifteen summers! [*A bugle sounds.*

Rod. Hark, my lord, the bugle!

Ida (*peevishly to RODOLPH*). Why need you tell
him that? Can he not hear it

Without your echo?

Rod. Pardon me, fair baroness!

Ida. I will not pardon you, unless you earn it
By aiding me in my dissuasion of
Count Ulric from the chase to day.

Rod. You will not.
Lady, need aid of mine.

Ulr. I must not now
Forego it.

Ida. But you shall!

Ulr. *Shall!*

Ida. Yes, or be
No true knight. — Come, dear Ulric! yield to me
In this, for this one day: the day looks heavy,
And you are turned so pale and ill.

Ulr. You jest.

Ida. Indeed I do not: — ask of Rodolph.

Rod. Truly,
My lord, within this quarter of an hour
You have changed more than e'er I saw you change
In years.

Ulr. 'Tis nothing; but if 't were, the air
Would soon restore me. I'm the true chameleon,
And live but on the atmosphere; your feasts
In castle halls, and social banquets, nurse not
My spirit — I'm a forester and breather
Of the steep mountain-tops, where I love all
The eagle loves.

Ida. Except his prey, I hope.

Ulr. Sweet Ida, wish me a fair chase, and I
Will bring you six boars' heads for trophies home.

Ida. And will you not stay, then? You shall
not go!

Come! I will sing to you.

Ulr. Ida, you scarcely
Will make a soldier's wife.

Ida. I do not wish

To be so ; for I trust these wars are over,
And you will live in peace on your domains.

Enter WERNER as COUNT SIEGENDORF.

Ulr. My father, I salute you, and it grieves me
With such brief greeting. — You have heard our
bugle ;

The vassals wait.

Sieg. So let them. — You forget
To-morrow is the appointed festival
In Prague for peace restored. You are apt to follow
The chase with such an ardor as will scarce
Permit you to return to-day, or if
Returned, too much fatigued to join to-morrow
The nobles in our marshalled ranks.

Ulr. You, count,
Will well supply the place of both — I am not
A lover of these pageantries.

Sieg. No, Ulric :
It were not well that you alone of all
Our young nobility —

Ida. And far the noblest
In aspect and demeanor.

Sieg. (to IDA). True, dear child,
Though somewhat frankly said for a fair damsel. —
But, Ulric, recollect too our position,
So lately reinstated in our honors.
Believe me, 't would be marked in any house,
But most in *ours*, that ONE should be found wanting
At such a time and place. Besides, the Heaven

Which gave us back our own, in the same moment
It spread its peace o'er all, hath double claims
On us for thanksgiving: first, for our country;
And next, that we are here to share its blessings.

Ulr. (aside). Devout, too! Well, sir, I obey at
once. *(Then aloud to a Servant.)*

Ludwig, dismiss the train without! [*Exit LUDWIG*]

Ida. And so

You yield at once to him what I for hours
Might supplicate in vain.

Sieg. (smiling). You are not jealous
Of me, I trust, my pretty rebel! who
Would sanction disobedience against all
Except thyself? But fear not; thou shalt rule him
Hereafter with a fonder sway and firmer.

Ida. But I should like to govern *now*.

Sieg. You shall,
Your *harp*, which by the way awaits you with
The countess in her chamber. She complains
That you are a sad truant to your music:
She attends you.

Ida. Then good morrow, my kind kinsmen!
Ulric, you'll come and hear me?

Ulr. By and by.

Ida. Be sure I'll sound it better than your bugles;
Then pray you be as punctual to its notes:
I'll play you King Gustavus' march.

Ulr. And why not
Old Tilly's?

Ida. Not that monster's! I should think

My harp-strings rang with groans, and not with music,

Could aught of *his* sound on it:—but come quickly,
Your mother will be eager to receive you.

[*Exit* IDA.]

Sieg. Ulric, I wish to speak with you alone.

Ulr. My time's your vassal.

(*Aside to* RODOLPH.) Rodolph, hence! and do
As I directed: and by his best speed
And readiest means let Rosenberg reply.

Rod. Count Siegendorf, command you aught? I
am bound
Upon a journey past the frontier.

Sieg. (*starts*).

Ah! —

Where? on *what* frontier?

Rod. The Silesian, on
My way — (*Aside to* ULRIC.) — *Where* shall I say?

Ulr. (*aside to* RODOLPH.) To Hamburgh.

(*Aside to himself.*) That

Word will, I think, put a firm padlock on
His further inquisition.

Rod. Count, to Hamburgh.

Sieg. (*agitated*). Hamburgh! No, I have nought
to do there, nor
Am aught connected with that city. Then
God speed you!

Rod. Fare ye well, Count Siegendorf!

[*Exit* RODOLPH.]

Sieg. Ulric, this man, who has just departed, is
One of those strange companions whom I fain
Would reason with you on.

Ulr. My lord, he is
Noble by birth, of one of the first houses
In Saxony.

Sieg. I talk not of his birth,
But of his bearing. Men speak lightly of him.

Ulr. So they will do of most men. Even the
monarch
Is not fenced from his chamberlain's slander, or
The sneer of the last courtier whom he has made
Great and ungrateful.

Sieg. If I must be plain,
The world speaks more than lightly of this Rodolph:
They say he is leagued with the "black bands"
who still
Ravage the frontier.

Ulr. And will you believe
The world?

Sieg. In this case — yes.

Ulr. In *any* case,
I thought you knew it better than to take
An accusation for a sentence.

Sieg. Son!
I understand you: you refer to —— but
My Destiny has so involved about me
Her spider web, that I can only flutter
Like the poor fly, but break it not. Take heed,
Ulric; you have seen to what the passions led me:
Twenty long years of misery and famine
Quenched them not — twenty thousand more, per-
chance,

But dark deeds (ay, the darkest, if all Rumor Reports be true), with whom thou consortest, Will lead thee ——

Ulr. (impatiently). I'll be *led* by no man.

Sieg.

Nor

Be leader of such, I would hope: at once To wean thee from the perils of thy youth And haughty spirit, I have thought it well That thou shouldst wed the lady Ida — more As thou appear'st to love her.

Ulr.

I have said

I will obey your orders, were they to Unite with Hecate — can a son say more?

Sieg. He says too much in saying this. It is not The nature of thine age, nor of thy blood, Nor of thy temperament, to talk so coolly, Or act so carelessly, in that which is The bloom or blight of all men's happiness, (For Glory's pillow is but restless if [bias, Love lay not down his cheek there): some strong Some master fiend is in thy service to Misrule the mortal who believes him slave, And makes his every thought subservient; else Thou'dst say at once — "I love young Ida, and Will wed her;" or, "I love her not, and all The powers of earth shall never make me." — So Would I have answered.

Ulr.

Sir, *you wed* for love?

Sieg. I did, and it has been my only refuge In many miseries.

Ulr. Which miseries
Had never been but for this love-match.

Sieg. Still
Against your age and nature ! Who at twenty
E'er answered thus till now ?

Ulr. Did you not warn me
Against your own example ?

Sieg. Boyish sophist !
In a word, do you love, or love not, Ida ?

Ulr. What matters it, if I am ready to
Obey you in espousing her ?

Sieg. As far
As you feel, nothing, but all life for her.
She's young — all beautiful — adores you — is
Endowed with qualities to give happiness,
Such as rounds common life into a dream
Of something which your poets cannot paint,
And (if it were not wisdom to love virtue)
For which Philosophy might barter Wisdom ;
And giving so much happiness, deserves
A little in return. I would not have her
Break her heart for a man who has none to break ;
Or wither on her stalk like some pale rose
Deserted by the bird she thought a nightingale,
According to the Orient tale. She is ——

Ulr. The daughter of dead Stralenheim, your foe :
I'll wed her, ne'ertheless ; though, to say truth,
Just now I am not violently transported
In favor of such unions.

Sieg. But she loves you,

Ulr. And I love her, and therefore would think
twice.

Sieg. Alas! Love never *did* so.

Ulr. Then 't is time
He should begin, and take the bandage from
His eyes, and look before he leaps: till now
He hath ta'en a jump i' the dark.

Sieg. But you consent?

Ulr. I did, and do.

Sieg. Then fix the day.

Ulr. 'T is usual,
And certes courteous, to leave that to the lady.

Sieg. I will engage for *her*.

Ulr. So will not *I*
For any woman; and as what I fix,
I fain would see unshaken, when she gives
Her answer, I'll give mine.

Sieg. But 't is your office
To woo.

Ulr. Count, 't is a marriage of your making,
So be it of your wooing; but to please you
I will now pay my duty to my mother,
With whom, you know, the lady Ida is. —
What would you have? You have forbid my stirring
For manly sports beyond the castle walls,
And I obey; you bid me turn a chamberer,
To pick up gloves, and fans, and knitting-needles,
And list to songs and tunes, and watch for smiles,
And smile at pretty prattle, and look into
The eyes of feminine, as though they were

The stars receding early to our wish
Upon the dawn of a world-winning battle —
What can a son or man do more? [*Exit* ULRIC.

Sieg. (solus). Too much! —

Too much of duty and too little love!

He pays me in the coin he owes me not:

For such hath been my wayward fate, I could not
Fulfil a parent's duties by his side

Till now; but love he owes me, for my thoughts

Ne'er left him, nor my eyes longed without tears

To see my child again, and now I have found him!

But how! — obedient, but with coldness; duteous

In my sight, but with carelessness; mysterious —

Abstracted — distant — much given to long absence,

And where — none know — in league with the most
riotous

Of our young nobles; though, to do him justice,

He never stoops down to their vulgar pleasures;

Yet there's some tie between them which I cannot

Unravel. They look up to him — consult him —

Throng round him as a leader: but with me

He hath no confidence! Ah! can I hope it

After — what! doth my father's curse descend

Even to my child? Or is the Hungarian near

To shed more blood? or — Oh! if it should be!

Spirit of Stralenheim, dost thou walk these walls

To wither him and his — who, though they slew not,

Unlatched the door of death for thee? 'T was not

Our fault, nor is our sin: thou wert our foe,

And yet I spared thee when my own destruction

Slept with thee, to awake with thine awakening !
And only took — Accursed gold ! thou liest
Like poison in my hands ; I dare not use thee,
Nor part from thee ; thou camest in such a guise,
Methinks thou wouldst contaminate all hands
Like mine. Yet I have done, to atone for thee,
Thou villanous gold ! and thy dead master's doom,
Though he died not by me or mine, as much
As if he were my brother ! I have ta'en
His orphan Ida — cherished her as one
Who will be mine.

Enter an ATTENDANT.

Atten. The abbot, if it please
Your excellency, whom you sent for, waits
Upon you. *[Exit ATTENDANT.]*

Enter the PRIOR ALBERT.

Prior. Peace be with these walls, and all
Within them !

Sieg. Welcome, welcome, holy father !
And may thy prayer be heard ! — all men have need
Of such, and I —

Prior. Have the first claim to all
The prayers of our community. Our convent,
Erected by your ancestors, is still
Protected by their children.

Sieg. Yes, good father ;
Continue daily orisons for us
In these dim days of heresies and blood,

Though the schismatic Swede, Gustavus, is
Gone home.

Prior. To the endless home of unbelievers,
Where there is everlasting wail and woe,
Gnashing of teeth, and tears of blood, and fire
Eternal, and the worm which dieth not!

Sieg. True, father: and to avert those pangs
from one,
Who, though of our most faultless holy church,
Yet died without its last and dearest offices,
Which smoothe the soul through purgatorial pains,
I have to offer humbly this donation
In masses for his spirit.

[SIEGENDORF offers the gold which he had taken
from STRALENHEIM.]

Prior. Count, if I
Receive it, 't is because I know too well
Refusal would offend you. Be assured
The largess shall be only dealt in alms,
And every mass no less sung for the dead.
Our house needs no donations, thanks to yours,
Which has of old endowed it; but from you
And yours in all meet things 't is fit we obey.
For whom shall mass be said?

Sieg. (faltering). For — for — the dead.

Prior. His name?

Sieg. T' is from a soul, and not a name,
I would avert perdition.

Prior. I meant not
To pry into your secret. We will pray
For one unknown, the same as for the proudest.

Sieg. Secret! I have none; but, father, he who's
gone
Might *have* one; or, in short, he did bequeathe —
No, not bequeathe — but I bestow this sum
For pious purposes.

Prior. A proper deed
In the behalf of our departed friends.

Sieg. But he who's gone was not my friend, but
foe,
The deadliest and the stanchest.

Prior. Better still!
To employ our means to obtain heaven for the
souls
Of our dead enemies is worthy those
Who can forgive them living.

Sieg. But I did not
Forgive this man. I loathed him to the last,
As he did me. I do not love him now,
But —

Prior. Best of all! for this is pure religion!
You fain would rescue him you hate from hell —
An evangelical compassion — with
Your own gold too!

Sieg. Father, 't is not my gold.

Prior. Whose then? You said it was no
legacy.

Sieg. No matter whose — of this be sure, that he
Who owned it never more will need it, save
In that which it may purchase from your altars:
'T is yours, or theirs.

Prior. Is there no blood upon it?

Sieg. No ; but there 's worse than blood — eternal shame !

Prior. Did he who owned it die in his *bed*?

Sieg. Alas !

He did.

Prior. Son ! you relapse into revenge,
If you regret your enemy's bloodless death.

Sieg. His death was fathomlessly deep in blood.

Prior. You said he died in bed, not battle.

Sieg. He
Died, I scarce know — but — he was stabbed i' the
dark,

And now you have it — perished on his pillow
By a cut-throat ! — Ay ! — you may look upon me !
I am not the man. I'll meet your eye on that point,
As I can one day God's.

Prior. Nor did he die
By means, or men, or instrument of yours ?

Sieg. No ! by the God who sees and strikes !

Prior. Nor know you
Who slew him ?

Sieg. I could only guess at *one*,
And he to me a stranger, unconnected,
As unemployed. Except by one day's knowledge,
I never saw the man who was suspected.

Prior. Then you are free from guilt.

Sieg. (eagerly). Oh ! *am* I ? — say !

Prior. You have said so, and know best.

Sieg. Father ! I have spoken

The truth, and nought but truth, if *not* the *whole* :
Yet say I am *not* guilty ! for the blood
Of this man weighs on me, as if I shed it,
Though, by the Power who abhorreth human blood,
I did not ! — nay, once spared it, when I might
And *could* — ay, perhaps, *should* (if our self-safety
Be e'er excusable in such defences
Against the attacks of over-potent foes) :
But pray for him, for me, and all my house ;
For, as I said, though I be innocent,
I know not why, a like remorse is on me,
As if he had fallen by me or mine. Pray for me
Father ! I have prayed myself in vain.

Prior.

I will.

Be comforted ! You are innocent, and should
Be calm as innocence.

Sieg.

But calmness is not

Always the attribute of innocence.

I feel it is not.

Prior.

But it will be so,

When the mind gathers up its truth within it.

Remember the great festival to-morrow,

In which you rank amidst our chiefest nobles,

As well as your brave son ; and smoothe your aspect,

Nor in the general orison of thanks

For bloodshed stopt, let blood you shed not rise,

A cloud upon your thoughts. This were to be

Too sensitive. Take comfort, and forget

Such things, and leave remorse unto the guilty.

[*Exeunt*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A large and magnificent Gothic Hall in the Castle of Siegendorf, decorated with Trophies, Banners, and Arms of that Family.

Enter ARNHEIM and MEISTER, attendants of
COUNT SIEGENDORF.

Arn. Be quick! the count will soon return: the ladies

Already are at the portal. Have you sent
The messengers in search of him he seeks for?

Meis. I have, in all directions, over Prague,
As far as the man's dress and figure could
By your description track him. The devil take
These revels and processions! All the pleasure
(If such there be) must fall to the spectators.
I'm sure none doth to us who make the show.

Arn. Go to! my lady countess comes.

Meis. I'd rather
Ride a day's hunting on an outworn jade,
Than follow in the train of a great man
In these dull pageantries.

Arn. Begone! and rail
Within. [*Exeunt.*

Enter the COUNTESS JOSEPHINE SIEGENDORF and
IDA STRALENHEIM.

Jos. Well, Heaven be praised, the show is over!

Ida. How can you say so! never have I dreamt

Of aught so beautiful. The flowers, the boughs,
The banners, and the nobles, and the knights,
The gems, the robes, the plumes, the happy faces,
The coursers, and the incense, and the sun
Streaming through the stained windows, even the
tombs,

Which looked so calm, and the celestial hymns,
Which seemed as if they rather came from heaven
Than mounted there. The bursting organ's peal
Rolling on high like an harmonious thunder;
The white robes and the lifted eyes; the world
At peace! and all at peace with one another!

Oh, my sweet mother! [*Embracing* JOSEPHINE.

Jos. My beloved child!

For such, I trust, thou shalt be shortly.

Ida. Oh!

I am so already. Feel how my heart beats!

Jos. It does, my love; and never may it throb
With aught more bitter.

Ida. Never shall it do so!

How should it? What should make us grieve? I
hate

To hear of sorrow: how can we be sad,
Who love each other so entirely? You,
The count, and Ulric, and your daughter Ida.

Jos. Poor child!

Ida. Do you pity me?

Jos. No; I but envy.

And that in sorrow, not in the world's sense
Of the universal vice, if one vice be
More general than another.

Ida. I'll not hear
A word against a world which still contains
You and my Ulric. Did you ever see
Aught like him? How he towered amongst them all!
How all eyes followed him! The flowers fell faster—
Rained from each lattice at his feet, methought,
Than before all the rest; and where he trod
I dare be sworn that they grow still, nor e'er
Will wither.

Jos. You will spoil him, little flatterer,
If he should hear you.

Ida. But he never will.
I dare not say so much to him—I fear him.

Jos. Why so? he loves you well.

Ida. But I can never
Shape my thoughts *of* him into words *to* him.
Besides, he sometimes frightens me.

Jos. How so?

Ida. A cloud comes o'er his blue eyes suddenly,
Yet he says nothing.

Jos. It is nothing: all men,
Especially in these dark troublous times,
Have much to think of.

Ida. But I cannot think
Of aught save him.

Jos. Yet there are other men,
In the world's eye, as goodly. There's, for instance
The young Count Waldorf, who scarce once withdrew
His eyes from yours to-day.

Ida. I did not see him
But Ulric. Did you not see at the moment

When all knelt, and I wept? and yet methought,
'Through my fast tears, though they were thick and
warm,

I saw him smiling on me.

Jos.

I could not

See aught save heaven, to which my eyes were raised
Together with the people's.

Ida.

I thought too

Of heaven, although I looked on Ulric.

Jos.

Come,

Let us retire; they will be here anon
Expectant of the banquet. We will lay
Aside these nodding plumes and dragging trains.

Ida. And, above all, these stiff and heavy jewels,
Which make my head and heart ache, as both throb
Beneath their glitter o'er my brow and zone.
Dear mother, I am with you.

Enter COUNT SIEGENDORF, *in full dress, from the
solemnity, and* LUDWIG.

Sieg.

Is he not found?

Lud. Strict search is making everywhere; and if
The man be in Prague, be sure he will be found.

Sieg. Where's Ulric?

Lud.

He rode round the other way
With some young nobles; but he left them soon;
And, if I err not, not a minute since
I heard his excellency, with his train,
Gallop o'er the west drawbridge.

Enter ULRIC, splendidly dressed.

Sieg. (to LUDWIG). See they cease not
Their quest of him I have described. [*Exit LUDWIG.*

Oh, Ulric!

How have I longed for thee!

Ulr. Your wish is granted —
Behold me!

Sieg. I have seen the murderer.

Ulr. Whom? Where?

Sieg. The Hungarian, who slew Stralenheim.

Ulr. You dream.

Sieg. I live! and as I live, I saw him —
Heard him! he dared to utter even my name.

Ulr. What name?

Sieg. Werner! 't was mine.

Ulr. It must be so
No more: forget it.

Sieg. Never! never! all
My destinies were woven in that name:
It will not be engraved upon my tomb,
But it may lead me there.

Ulr. To the point — the Hungarian?

Sieg. Listen! — The church was thronged; the
hymn was raised;

“*Te Deum*” pealed from nations, rather than
From choirs, in one great cry of “God be praised”
For one day’s peace, after thrice ten dread years,
Each bloodier than the former: I arose,
With all the nobles, and as I looked down
Along the lines of lifted faces, — from

Our bannered and escutcheoned gallery, I
Saw, like a flash of lightning (for I saw
A moment and no more), what struck me sightless
To all else — the Hungarian's face! I grew
Sick; and when I recovered from the mist
Which curled about my senses, and again
Looked down, I saw him not. The thanksgiving
Was over, and we marched back in procession.

Ulr. Continue.

Sieg. When we reached the Muldau's bridge,
The joyous crowd above, the numberless
Barks manned with revellers in their best garbs,
Which shot along the glancing tide below,
The decorated street, the long array,
The clashing music, and the thundering
Of far artillery, which seemed to bid
A long and loud farewell to its great doings,
The standards o'er me and the tramlings round,
The roar of rushing thousands, — all — all could not
Chase this man from my mind, although my senses
No longer held him palpable.

Ulr. You saw him
No more, then?

Sieg. I looked, as a dying soldier
Looks at a draught of water, for this man:
But still I saw him not; but in his stead —

Ulr. What in his stead?

Sieg. My eye for ever fell
Upon your dancing crest; the loftiest,
As on the loftiest and the loveliest head

It rose the highest of the stream of plumes,
Which overflowed the glittering streets of Prague.

Ulr. What's this to the Hungarian?

Sieg. Much; for I
Had almost then forgot him in my son;
When just as the artillery ceased, and paused
The music, and the crowd embraced in lieu
Of shouting, I heard in a deep, low voice,
Distinct and keener far upon my ear [*ner!*"]
Than the late cannon's volume, this word — "*Wer-*

Ulr. Uttered by —

Sieg. HIM! I turned — and saw — and fell.

Ulr. And wherefore? Were you seen?

Sieg. The officious care
Of those around me dragged me from the spot,
Seeing my faintness, ignorant of the cause;
You, too, were too remote in the procession
(The old nobles being divided from their children)
To aid me.

Ulr. But I'll aid you now.

Sieg. In what?

Ulr. In searching for this man, or — When
he's found

What shall we do with him?

Sieg. I know not that.

Ulr. Then wherefore seek?

Sieg. Because I cannot rest
Till he is found. His fate, and Stralenheim's,
And ours, seem intertwined! nor can be
Unravelled, till —

Enter an ATTENDANT.

Atten. A stranger to wait on
Your excellency.

Sieg. Who?

Atten. He gave no name.

Sieg. Admit him, ne'ertheless.

[*The ATTENDANT introduces GABOR, and afterwards exit.*

Ah!

Gab. 'Tis, then, Werner!

Sieg. (haughtily). The same you knew, sir, by
that name; and *you!*

Gab. (looking round). I recognize you both:
father and son,

It seems. Count, I have heard that you, or yours,
Have lately been in search of me: I am here.

Sieg. I have sought you, and have found you:
you are charged

(Your own heart may inform you why) with such
A crime as ——— [He pauses.

Gab. Give it utterance, and then
I'll meet the consequences.

Sieg. You shall do so —
Unless ———

Gab. First, who accuses me?

Sieg. All things,
If not all men: the universal rumor —
My own presence on the spot — the place — the
time —

And every speck of circumstance unite
To fix the blot on you.

Gab. And on *me only*?
Pause ere you answer: is no other name,
Save mine, stained in this business?

Sieg. Trifling villain!
Who play'st with thine own guilt! Of all that
breathe
Thou best dost know the innocence of him
'Gainst whom thy breath would blow thy bloody
slander.

But I will talk no further with a wretch,
Further than justice asks. Answer at once,
And without quibbling, to my charge.

Gab. 'Tis false!

Sieg. Who says so?

Gab. I.

Sieg. And how disprove it?

Gab. By
The presence of the murderer.

Sieg. Name him!

Gab. He
May have more names than one. Your lordship
had so
Once on a time.

Sieg. If you mean me, I dare
Your utmost.

Gab. You may do so, and in safety;
I know the assassin.

Sieg. Where is he?

Gab. (*pointing to ULRIC*). Beside you!
[ULRIC rushes forward to attack GABOR; SIEGEN-
DORF interposes.]

Sieg. Liar and fiend ! but you shall not be slain ;
These walls are mine, and you are safe within them.

[*He turns to ULRIC.*

Ulric, repel this calumny, as I
Will do. I avow it is a growth so monstrous,
I could not deem it earth-born : but be calm ;
It will refute itself. But touch him not.

[*ULRIC endeavors to compose himself.*

Gab. Look at *him*, count, and then *hear me*.

Sieg. (*first to GABOR, and then looking at ULRIC*).
I hear thee.

My God ! you look ——

Ulr. How ?

Sieg. As on that dread night
When we met in the garden.

Ulr. (*composes himself*). It is nothing.

Gab. Count, you are bound to hear me. I came
hither

Not seeking you, but sought. When I knelt down
Amidst the people in the church, I dreamed not
To find the beggared Werner in the seat
Of senators and princes ; but you have called me,
And we have met.

Sieg. Go on, sir.

Gab. Ere I do so,
Allow me to inquire who profited
By Stralenheim's death ? Was't I — as poor as ever ;
And poorer by suspicion on my name !
The baron lost in that last outrage neither
Jewels nor gold ; his life alone was sought, —

A life which stood between the claims of others
To honors and estates scarce less than princely.

Sieg. These hints, as vague as vain, attach no less
To me than to my son.

Gab. I can't help that.
But let the consequence alight on him
Who feels himself the guilty one amongst us.
I speak to you, Count Siegendorf, because
I know you innocent, and deem you just.
But ere I can proceed — *dare* you protect me?
Dare you command me?

[SIEGENDORF *first looks at the Hungarian, and
then at ULRIC, who has unbuckled his sabre,
and is drawing lines with it on the floor —
still in its sheath.*

Ulr. (*looks at his father and says*)

Let the man go on!

Gab. I am unarmed, count — bid your son lay
down

His sabre.

Ulr. (*offers it to him contemptuously*).

Take it.

Gab. No, sir, 't is enough

That we are both unarmed — I would not choose
To wear a steel which may be stained with more
Blood than came there in battle.

Ulr. (*casts the sabre from him in contempt*).

It — or some

Such other weapon, in my hands — spared yours
Once when disarmed and at my mercy.

Gab.

True —

I have not forgotten it : you spared me for
Your own especial purpose — to sustain
An ignominy not my own.

Ulr.

Proceed.

The tale is doubtless worthy the relater.
But is it of my father to hear further?

[*To SIEGENDORF.**Sieg. (Takes his son by the hand.)*

My son, I know my own innocence, and doubt not
Of yours — but I have promised this man patience.
Let him continue.

Gab.

I will not detain you

By speaking of myself much ; I began
Life early — and am what the world has made me.
At Frankfort on the Oder, where I passed
A winter in obscurity, it was
My chance at several places of resort
(Which I frequented sometimes but not often)
To hear related a strange circumstance
In February last. A martial force,
Sent by the state, had, after strong resistance,
Secured a band of desperate men, supposed
Marauders from the hostile camp. — They proved,
However, not to be so — but banditti,
Whom either accident or enterprise
Had carried from their usual haunt — the forests
Which skirt Bohemia — even into Lusatia.
Many amongst them were reported of
High rank — and martial law slept for a time

At last they were escorted o'er the frontiers,
And placed beneath the civil jurisdiction
Of the free town of Frankfort. Of *their* fate,
I know no more.

Sieg. And what is this to Ulric?

Gab. Amongst them there was said to be one man
Of wonderful endowments : — birth and fortune,
Youth, strength, and beauty, almost superhuman,
And courage as unrivalled, were proclaimed
His by the public rumor ; and his sway,
Not only over his associates, but
His judges, was attributed to witchcraft.
Such was his influence : — I have no great faith
In any magic save that of the mine —
I therefore deemed him wealthy. — But my soul
Was roused with various feelings to seek out
This prodigy, if only to behold him.

Sieg. And did you so?

Gab. You'll hear. Chance favored me :
A popular affray in the public square
Drew crowds together — it was one of those
Occasions where men's souls look out of them,
And show them as they are — even in their faces :
The moment my eye met his, I exclaimed,
“This is the man!” though he was then, as since,
With the nobles of the city. I felt sure
I had not erred, and watched him long and nearly :
I noted down his form — his gesture — features,
Stature, and bearing — and amidst them all,
Midst every natural and acquired distinction,

I could discern, methought, the assassin's eye
And gladiator's heart.

Ulr. (smiling). The tale sounds well.

Gab. And may sound better. — He appeared
to me

One of those beings to whom Fortune bends
As she doth to the daring — and on whom
The fates of others oft depend ; besides,
An indescribable sensation drew me
Near to this man, as if my point of fortune
Was to be fixed by him. — There I was wrong.

Sieg. And may not be right now.

Gab. I followed him,
Solicited his notice — and obtained it —
Though not his friendship : — it was his intention
To leave the city privately — we left it
Together — and together we arrived
In the poor town where Werner was concealed,
And Stralenheim was succored — Now we are on
The verge — *dare* you hear further ?

Sieg. I must do so —
Or I have heard too much.

Gab. I saw in you
A man above his station — and if not
So high, as now I find you, in my then
Conceptions, 't was that I had rarely seen
Men such as you appeared in height of mind
In the most high of worldly rank ; you were
Poor, even to all save rags : I would have shared
My purse, though slender, with you — you refused it.

Sieg. Doth my refusal make a debt to you,
That thus you urge it?

Gab. Still you owe me something,
Though not for that; and I owed you my safety,
At least my seeming safety, when the slaves
Of Stralenheim pursued me on the grounds
That *I* had robbed him.

Sieg. I concealed you — I,
Whom and whose house you arraign, reviving viper!

Gab. I accuse no man — save in my defence.
You, count, have made yourself accuser — judge:
Your hall's my court, your heart is my tribunal.
Be just, and *I*'ll be merciful!

Sieg. You merciful!
You! Base calumniator!

Gab. I. 'T will rest
With me at last to be so. You concealed me —
In secret passages known to yourself,
You said, and to none else. At dead of night,
Weary with watching in the dark, and dubious
Of tracing back my way, I saw a glimmer,
Through distant crannies, of a twinkling light:
I followed it, and reached a door — a secret
Portal — which opened to the chamber, where,
With cautious hand and slow, having first undone
As much as made a crevice of the fastening,
I looked through and beheld a purple bed,
And on it Stralenheim! —

Sieg. Asleep! And yet
You slew him! — Wretch!

Gab. He was already slain,
And bleeding like a sacrifice. My own
Blood became ice.

Sieg. But he was all alone!
You saw none else? You did not see the ——
[*He pauses from agitation.*

Gab. No,
He, whom you dare not name, nor even I
Scarce dare to recollect, was not then in
The chamber.

Sieg. (to ULRIC). Then, my boy! thou art guilt-
less still —
Thou bad'st me say *I* was so once — Oh! now
Do thou as much!

Gab. Be patient! I can *not*
Recede now, though it shake the very walls
Which frown above us. You remember, — or
If not, your son does, — that the locks were changed
Beneath *his* chief inspection on the morn
Which led to this same night: how he had entered
He best knows — but within an antechamber,
The door of which was half ajar, I saw
A man who washed his bloody hands, and oft
With stern and anxious glance gazed back upon
The bleeding body — but it moved no more.

Sieg. Oh! God of fathers!

Gab. I beheld his features
As I see yours — but yours they were not, though
Resembling them — behold them in Count Ulric's!
Distinct as I beheld them, though the expression

Is not now what it then was ; — but it was so
When I first charged him with the crime -- so lately.

Sieg. This is so ——

Gab. (*interrupting him*). Nay — but hear me to
the end !

Now you must do so. — I conceived myself
Betrayed by you and *him* (for now I saw
There was some tie between you) into this
Pretended den of refuge, to become
The victim of your guilt ; and my first thought
Was vengeance : but though armed with a short
poniard

(Having left my sword without) I was no match
For him at any time, as had been proved
That morning — either in address or force.
I turned, and fled — i' the dark : chance rather than
Skill made me gain the secret door of the hall,
And thence the chamber where you slept : if I
Had found you *waking*, Heaven alone can tell
What vengeance and suspicion might have prompted ;
But ne'er slept guilt as Werner slept that night.

Sieg. And yet I had horrid dreams ! and such
brief sleep,

The stars had not gone down when I awoke.
Why didst thou spare me ? I dreamt of my father —
And now my dream is out !

Gab. "Tis not my fault,
If I have read it. — Well ! I fled and hid me —
Chance led me here after so many moons —
And showed me Werner in Count Siegendorf !

Werner, whom I had sought in huts in vain,
Inhabited the palace of a sovereign!
You sought me and have found me.—now you
know

My secret, and may weigh its worth.

Sieg. (after a pause). Indeed!

Gab. Is it revenge or justice which inspires
Your meditation?

Sieg. Neither—I was weighing
The value of your secret.

Gab. You shall know it
At once:—When you were poor, and I, though
poor,
Rich enough to relieve such poverty
As might have envied mine, I offered you
My purse—you would not share it:—I'll be
franker

With you: you are wealthy, noble, trusted by
The imperial powers—you understand me?

Sieg. Yes.

Gab. Not quite. You think me venal, and scarce
true:

'Tis no less true, however, that my fortunes
Have made me both at present. You shall aid me:
I would have aided you—and also have
Been somewhat damaged in my name to save
Yours and your son's. Weigh well what I have
said.

Sieg. Dare you await the event of a few minutes'
Deliberation?

Gab. (*casts his eyes on ULRIC, who is leaning against a pillar*). If I should do so?

Sieg. I pledge my life for yours. Withdraw into This tower. [*Opens a turret door.*]

Gab. (*hesitatingly*). This is the second safe asylum

You have offered me.

Sieg. And was not the first so?

Gab. I know not that even now — but will approve The second. I have still a further shield. — I did not enter Prague alone; and should I Be put to rest with Stralenheim, there are Some tongues without will wag in my behalf. Be brief in your decision! *

Sieg. I will be so. —

My word is sacred and irrevocable

Within *these* walls, but it extends no further.

Gab. I'll take it for so much. [*ground.*]

Sieg. (*points to ULRIC's sabre still upon the* Take also *that* —

I saw you eye it eagerly, and him Distrustfully.

Gab. (*takes up the sabre*). I will; and so provide To sell my life — not cheaply.

* [*Gab.* I have yet an additional security — I did not enter Prague a solitary individual; and there are tongues without that will speak for me, although I should even share the fate of Stralenheim. Let your deliberation be short." — "*Sieg.* My promise is solemn, sacred, irrevocable: It extends not, however, beyond these walls." — MISS LEE.]

[GABOR goes into the turret, which SIEGENDORF closes.]

Sieg. (*advances to ULRIC*). Now, Count Ulric!
For son I dare not call thee — What say'st thou?

Ulr. His tale is true.

Sieg. True, monster!

Ulr. Most true, father!

And you did well to listen to it: what
We know, we can provide against. He must
Be silenced.

Sieg. Ay, with half of my domains;
And with the other half, could he and thou
Unsay this villany.

Ulr. It is no time
For trifling or dissembling. I have said
His story's true; and he too must be silenced.

Sieg. How so?

Ulr. As Stralenheim is. Are you so dull
As never to have hit on this before?
When we met in the garden, what except
Discovery in the act could make me know
His death? Or had the prince's household been
Then summoned, would the cry for the police
Been left to such a stranger? Or should I
Have loitered on the way? Or, could *you, Werner*,
The object of the baron's hate and fears,
Have fled, unless by many an hour before
Suspicion woke? I sought and fathomed you,
Doubting if you were false or feeble: I
Perceived you were the latter; and yet so

Confiding have I found you, that I doubted
At times your weakness.*

Sieg. Parricide! no less
Than common stabber! What deed of my life,
Or thought of mine, could make you deem me fit
For your accomplice?

Ulr. Father, do not raise
The devil you cannot lay between us. This
Is time for union and for action, not
For family disputes. While *you* were tortured,

* [I am ready to allow every fair license to dramatic verse; but still it must have more than the bare typographic impress of metre. Ten syllables, counted by finger and thumb, will not do. None of us imagine —

Day and Martin
To prevent fraud, request purchasers to
Look on the signature on the patent Blacking
Bottles, etc. —

to be versification, and the great majority of the lines in this tragedy are just as harmonious: — *e. g.* — “*Ul.* He too must be silenced. — *Wer.* How so? — *Ul.* As Stralenheim is. Are you so dull as never to have hit on this before? When we met in the garden, what except discovery in the act could make me know his death? Or had the prince’s household been then summoned, would the cry for the police been left to such a stranger? [Pretty English this last sentence by the by!] Or should I have loitered on the way? Or could you, Werner, the object of the baron’s hate and fears, have fled — unless by many an hour before suspicion woke? I sought and fathomed you, doubting if you were false or feeble: I perceived you were the latter; and yet so confiding have I found you, that I doubted at times your weakness,” etc. etc. There are other passages still more prosaic. Why they are printed for verse, I cannot for the life of me conjecture: they are as plain prose as a turnpike act. — DR. MAGINN.]

Could *I* be calm? Think you that I have heard
This fellow's tale without some feeling? — You
Have taught me feeling for *you* and myself;
For whom or what else did you ever teach it?

Sieg. Oh! my dead father's curse! 't is working
now.

Ulr. Let it work on! the grave will keep it down!
Ashes are feeble foes: it is more easy
To baffle such, than countermine a mole,
Which winds its blind but living path beneath you.
Yet hear me still! — If *you* condemn me, yet
Remember *who* hath taught me once too often
To listen to him! *Who* proclaimed to me
That *there were crimes* made venial by the occasion?
That passion was our nature? that the goods
Of Heaven waited on the goods of fortune?
Who showed me his humanity secured
By his *nerves* only? *Who* deprived me of
All power to vindicate myself and race
In open day? By his disgrace which stamped
(It might be) bastardy on me, and on
Himself — a *felon's* brand! The man who is
At once both warm and weak invites to deeds
He longs to do, but dare not. Is it strange
That I should *act* what you could *think*? We have
done

With right and wrong; and now must only ponder
Upon effects, not causes. Stralenheim,
Whose life I saved from impulse, as *unknown*,
I would have saved a peasant's or a dog's, I slew

Known as our foe — but not from vengeance. He
Was a rock in our way which I cut through,
As doth the bolt, because it stood between us
And our true destination — but not idly.
As stranger I preserved him, and he *owed me*
His *life*: when due, I but resumed the debt.
He, you, and I stood o'er a gulf wherein
I have plunged our enemy.* *You* kindled first
The torch — *you* showed the path; now trace me
that
Of safety — or let me!

Sieg. I have done with life!

Ulr. Let us have done with that which cankers
life —

Familiar feuds and vain recriminations
Of things which cannot be undone. We have
No more to learn or hide: I know no fear,
And have within these very walls men who
(Although you know them not) dare venture all
things.

* [*Ulr.* We stood on a precipice down which one of three
must inevitably have plunged; for I will not deny that I knew
my own situation to be as critical as yours. I therefore precipi-
tated Stralenheim! You held the torch! You pointed out the
path! Show me now that of safety; or let me show it you! —

Sieg. I have done with life!

Ulr. Let us have done with retrospection. We have nothing
more either to learn or to conceal from each other. I have cour-
age and partisans; they are even within the walls, though you
do not know them. Keep your own secret. Preserve an un-
changed countenance. Without your further interference I will
for ever secure you from the indiscretion of a *third* person," etc.
etc. — MISS LEE.]

You stand high with the state ; what passes here
Will not excite her too great curiosity :
Keep your own secret, keep a steady eye,
Stir not, and speak not ; — leave the rest to me :
We must have no *third* babblers thrust between us.

[*Exit* ULRIC.

Sieg. (solus). Am I awake ? are these my father's
halls ?

And *yon* — my son ? *My son ! mine !* who have ever
Abhorred both mystery and blood, and yet
Am plunged into the deepest hell of both !
I must be speedy, or more will be shed —
'The Hungarian's ! — Ulric — he hath partisans,
It seems : I might have guessed as much. Oh fool !
Wolves prowl in company. He hath the key
(As I too) of the opposite door which leads
Into the turret. Now then ! or once more
To be the father of fresh crimes, no less
Than of the criminal ! Ho ! Gabor ! Gabor !

[*Exit into the turret, closing the door after him.*

SCENE II.

The Interior of the Turret.

GABOR and SIEGENDORF.

Gab. Who calls ?

Sieg. I — Siegendorf ! Take these, and fly !
Lose not a moment !

[*Tears off a diamond star and other jewels, and
thrusts them into GABOR'S hand.*

Gab. What am I to do
With these?

Sieg. Whate'er you will: sell them, or hoard,
And prosper; but delay not, or you are lost!

Gab. You pledged your honor for my safety!

Sieg. And
Must thus redeem it. Fly! I am not master,
It seems, of my own castle — of my own
Retainers — nay, even of these very walls,
Or I would bid them fall and crush me! Fly!
Or you will be slain by ——

Gab. Is it even so?
Farewell, then! Recollect, however, Count,
You sought this fatal interview!

Sieg. I did:
Let it not be more fatal still! — Begone!

Gab. By the same path I entered?

Sieg. Yes; that's safe still,
But loiter not in Prague; — you do not know
With whom you have to deal.

Gab. I know too well —
And knew it ere yourself, unhappy sire!
Farewell! [*Exit GABOR.*

Sieg. (*solus and listening*). He hath cleared the
staircase. Ah! I hear
The door sound loud behind him! He is safe!
Safe! — Oh, my father's spirit! — I am faint ——
[*He leans down upon a stone seat, near the wall
of the tower, in a drooping posture.*

Enter ULRIC, with others armed, and with weapons drawn.

Ulr. Despatch! — he's there!

Lud. The count, my lord!

Ulr. (*recognizing SIEGENDORF*). You here, sir!

Sieg. Yes: if you want another victim, strike!

Ulr. (*seeing him stript of his jewels*). Where is the ruffian who hath plundered you?

Vassals, despatch in search of him! You see

'T was as I said — the wretch hath stript my father

Of jewels which might form a prince's heir-loom!

Away! I'll follow you forthwith.

[*Exeunt all but SIEGENDORF and ULRIC.*

What's this?

Where is the villain?

Sieg. There are *two*, sir: which

Are you in quest of?

Ulr. Let us hear no more

Of this: he must be found. You have not let him

Escape?

Sieg. He's gone.

Ulr. With your connivance?

Sieg. With

My fullest, freest aid.

Ulr. Then fare you well!

[*ULRIC is going.*

Sieg. Stop! I command — entreat — implore!

Oh, Ulric!

Will you then leave me?

Sieg. No, no ; I have no children : never more
Call me by that worst name of parent.

Jos. What
Means my good lord !

Sieg. That you have given birth
To a demon !

Ida. (*taking ULRIC's hand*). Who shall dare say
this of Ulric ?

Sieg. Ida, beware ! there's blood upon that hand.

Ida. (*stooping to kiss it*). I'd kiss it off, though it
were mine.

Sieg. It is so !

Ulr. Away ! it is your father's ! [*Exit ULRIC.*

Ida. Oh, great God !
And I have loved this man !

[*IDA falls senseless — JOSEPHINE stands speech-
less with horror.*

Sieg. The wretch hath slain
Them both ! — My Josephine ! we are now alone !
Would we had ever been so ! — All is over
For me ! — Now open wide, my sire, thy grave ;
Thy curse hath dug it deeper for thy son
In mine ! — The race of Siegendorf is past.

END OF VOL. VIII.







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